

Sanctity as literature in late medieval Britain

EDITED BY EVA VON CONTZEN
AND ANKE BERNAU



VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

MANCHESTER MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND CULTURE

SANCTITY AS LITERATURE
IN LATE MEDIEVAL BRITAIN

MANCHESTER
1824

Manchester University Press

Series editors: Anke Bernau and David Matthews

Series founded by: J. J. Anderson and Gail Ashton

Advisory board: Ruth Evans, Nicola McDonald, Andrew James Johnston, Sarah Salih, Larry Scanlon and Stephanie Trigg

The Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture series publishes new research, informed by current critical methodologies, on the literary cultures of medieval Britain (including Anglo-Norman, Anglo-Latin and Celtic writings), including post-medieval engagements with and representations of the Middle Ages (medievalism). 'Literature' is viewed in a broad and inclusive sense, embracing imaginative, historical, political, scientific, dramatic and religious writings. The series offers monographs and essay collections, as well as editions and translations of texts.

Titles Available in the Series

Language and imagination in the Gawain-poems

J. J. Anderson

Water and fire: The myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England

Daniel Anlezark

Transporting Chaucer

Helen Barr

Rethinking the South English legends

Heather Blurton and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (eds)

The Parlement of Foulys (by Geoffrey Chaucer)

D. S. Brewer (ed.)

Sanctity and pornography in medieval culture: On the verge

Bill Burgwinkle and Cary Howie

Between earth and heaven:

Liminality and the Ascension of Christ in Anglo-Saxon literature

Johanna Kramer

In strange countries: Middle English literature and its afterlife:

Essays in Memory of J. J. Anderson

David Matthews (ed.)

A Knight's Legacy: Mandeville and Mandevillian Lore in early modern England

Ladan Niayesh (ed.)

Greenery: Ecocritical readings of late medieval English literature

Gillian Rudd

Sanctity as literature in late medieval Britain

EDITED BY EVA VON CONTZEN AND ANKE BERNAU

Manchester University Press

Copyright © Manchester University Press 2015

While copyright in the volume as a whole is vested in Manchester University Press, copyright in individual chapters belongs to their respective authors, and no chapter may be reproduced wholly or in part without the express permission in writing of both author and publisher.

Published by Manchester University Press

Altrincham Street, Manchester M1 7JA

www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

ISBN 978 0 7190 8970 1 hardback

First published 2015

The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for any external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Typeset 10/12 Imprint MT by
Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire

Contents

Notes on contributors	<i>page</i> vii
Acknowledgements	x
Introduction: sanctity as literature	1
<i>Eva von Contzen</i>	
1 St Margaret and the literary politics of Scottish sainthood	18
<i>Kate Ash</i>	
2 Good knights and holy men: reading the virtue of soldier-saints in medieval literary genres	38
<i>Andrew Lynch</i>	
3 Englishing the saints in Robert Mannyng's <i>Handlyng Synne</i>	60
<i>Kate Greenspan</i>	
4 Modelling holiness: self-fashioning and sanctity in late medieval English mystical literature	80
<i>Jessica Barr</i>	
5 Body and soul: from doctrine to debate in medieval Welsh and Irish literature	96
<i>Helen Fulton</i>	
6 Chaucer and hagiographic authority	116
<i>Jennifer L. Sisk</i>	
7 Reading classical authors in Capgrave's <i>Life of St Katherine</i>	134
<i>Sarah James</i>	
8 Lydgate's saintly poetics	151
<i>Anke Bernau</i>	
9 Narrating vernacular sanctity: the <i>Scottish Legendary</i> as a challenge to the 'literary turn' in fifteenth-century hagiography	172
<i>Eva von Contzen</i>	

10	Reforming sanctity: the Digby <i>Mary Magdalen</i> and Lewis Wager's <i>Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene</i> <i>Tamara Atkin</i>	191
11	The humanist grammar of sanctity in the early <i>Lives</i> of Thomas More <i>Anna Siebach Larsen</i>	209
12	Afterword: calendar time in <i>balade</i> form <i>Catherine Sanok</i>	228
	Bibliography	245
	Index	271

Notes on contributors

Kate Ash is a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow at Liverpool Hope University. She has published articles on Anglo-Scottish relations in late medieval and early modern literature. Her main interests lie in literary articulations of memory and identity, and her current research examines the relationship between memory and confession in fifteenth and sixteenth century Scotland.

Tamara Atkin is a Lecturer in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance English Literature at Queen Mary, University of London. Her first book, *The Drama of Reform: Theology and Theatricality, 1461–1553*, was published by Brepols in 2013. Her latest work explores the relationship between drama, reading and the literary.

Jessica Barr is an Associate Professor of English at Eureka College. Her publications include *Willing to Know God: Dreamers and Visionaries of the Later Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010) and several articles on visionary and devotional literature. Her current research focuses on models of reading and interpretation in later medieval visionary literature and hagiography.

Anke Bernau is a Senior Lecturer in Medieval Literature and Culture at the University of Manchester. She has published on medieval (and post-medieval) virginities, origin myths, medieval film, and dream vision literature. She is currently working on curiosity in medieval literature.

Eva von Contzen is an Assistant Professor at Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. Currently she holds a fellowship at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS). Her research interests include the techniques of narrating sanctity in vernacular literature, the intersections of antiquity and the medieval, and, as a major new project, the functions and diachronic development of lists and other

forms of enumeration in literature. Her monograph on the *Scottish Legendary* will be published in 2015.

Helen Fulton is Professor of Medieval Literature in the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York. Her research focuses on cultural exchanges between medieval English and Welsh literatures, including Arthurian literature, prophecy, and political poetry. She is the editor of the *Blackwell Companion to Arthurian Literature* (2009) and her most recent book is the edited collection *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales* (2012).

Kate Greenspan is an Associate Professor of English at Skidmore College, New York. She received her PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She publishes on medieval German, Italian, and English mysticism, Middle English sermons, and autohagiography. Her latest project is a book of transcriptions, translations, and interpretive essays on the writings of the fifteenth-century German mystic Magdalena von Freiburg.

Sarah James is a Lecturer at the University of Kent in Canterbury. Her research interests are centred around theological writing in the later Middle Ages, asking questions about the ways in which medieval writers engaged with the religious debates of the day, and how ordinary people, for the most part with very limited access to written texts, experienced religion. She has published a number of articles on English vernacular theology, and on the works of the Austin Friar John Capgrave in particular.

Andrew Lynch is a Professor in English and Cultural Studies at The University of Western Australia, and a Chief Investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre for the History of Emotions, 1100–1800. With Michael Champion he is editing *Understanding Emotions in Early Europe* (Palgrave). *International Medievalism and Popular Culture* (Cambria, 2014), co-edited with Louise D'Arcens, has recently been published.

Catherine Sanok is an Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. She is the author of *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Medieval England* (University of Pennsylvania, 2007), and is currently at work on a book that explores forms of community in late medieval *Lives* of English saints.

Anna Siebach Larsen is currently finishing her doctoral thesis entitled 'Envisioning Devotion: Word, Image, and Epistemology in Thirteenth-Century England' at the University of Notre Dame. Her research interests include Middle English, Anglo-Norman, and Old French literature, in particular thirteenth-century devotional and religious texts; allegory (visual and verbal); medieval and modern literary theory as well as visual and poetic epistemologies.

Jennifer L. Sisk is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Vermont, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on medieval literature. She has published articles in *ELH*, the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, the *Chaucer Review*, *Modern Philology* and *Religion & Literature*. Although much of her research focuses on hagiography and sanctity, her other interests include medieval imagination, constructions of the literary, and the ways in which the formal properties of literature facilitate theorisations of religious belief and doubt.

Acknowledgements

Our interest in the intersections of sanctity and literature began when Eva, working on her dissertation on the *Scottish Legendary* and its narrative art, decided to organise a conference called ‘Sanctity and Literature’ at the Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany, in November 2010. The response to the call for papers was overwhelming – clearly the topic had touched a nerve. Anke was invited as a speaker and so began our many conversations about this topic, which culminated in our decision to put together a collection of essays that would open it up to wider discussion. We invited a selection of contributors who could cover a range of pertinent issues; we were excited that this brought together a combination of younger and more established researchers in the field. We would like to thank our anonymous readers, whose feedback and suggestions were immensely helpful and constructive. Thank you also to our contributors – it has been a pleasure working with you on this project!

Eva would like to thank Luuk Houwen, as well as the English Seminar and the rectorate of the Ruhr-University, whose valuable advice and financial help in organising the conference were much appreciated. Anke would like to thank the Humboldt Stiftung, whose support made possible a period of study leave in which some of the work for this book was completed.

Sanctity always requires witnesses who record its occurrence, and you have all become witnesses in recording the manifold instances of sanctity as literature in medieval Britain.

Bochum/Manchester, April 2014
Eva von Contzen and Anke Bernau

Introduction: sanctity as literature

Eva von Contzen

What does it mean to approach sanctity as *literature*? ‘Literature’ is often used as the umbrella term for any kind of writing produced in the medieval period, but this is not the kind of literature the title of this collection refers to. Instead, ‘literature’ is used synonymously with ‘the literary’ or ‘literariness’ – that is, a special quality of some texts. The explicit aim of this volume is *not* to provide an exhaustive definition of the literary in the late medieval period. Such an attempt can only fail given the complexity of the concept and its manifold implications. The examples considered in the twelve essays are focused on one configuration of literariness as it occurs within the sphere of texts dealing, in various forms, with sanctity. ‘Sanctity’ is used as a term to describe a range of phenomena, encompassing saints and their lives, miracles and heroic deeds as well as referring more generally to the condition of individuals inspired by religiosity that we find in a variety of medieval genres, including romances and other secular texts. It also includes the encounters with the divine related by mystics and even the ideal model of behaviour that every Christian was encouraged to strive for. The very fact that sainthood is such an important component of medieval culture, and that sanctity is such a diverse and mutable concept, means that a closer look at how writers engaged with sanctity, and how this engagement shaped their writing (and how their writing, in turn, shaped the kind of sanctity they were putting forward) is a question of importance for scholars of literature as well as for medievalists. Crucially, the essays are not concerned with sanctity *in* literature (i.e., in any medieval writing), but with medieval texts dealing with questions of holiness that bear marks of a discourse that can be described as ‘literary’. Looking at textual representations of sanctity allows for exploring what the ‘literary’ might mean in late medieval culture. Or, more accurately, what

literary devices and techniques are developed through writing on sanctity.

Texts characterised by such a distinctive literary quality or literariness have mostly been discussed only indirectly by medievalists who have been concerned to discuss literariness, but not usually in relation to texts dealing with sanctity. The individual works scholars focus upon tend to take precedence over more general implications of the features of literariness one may have singled out. In the introduction to the 2013 volume *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England*, Andrew Galloway encapsulates the status quo of medieval studies in the pursuit of the literary as follows: 'However legion the ingenious and wide-ranging work on this topic by medievalists, however deep the critical roots, no wide-ranging conference, monograph, or collection of essays has addressed this topic for medieval literature overtly or in any significant breadth of scope and theoretical approach.'¹ If the focus of inquiry is shifted to the literary features themselves and to the merits of what these traces of literariness imply – for medieval genres, medieval writing at large, and its place in the history of literature – it becomes evident that medievalists can contribute significantly to questions of form and function, to the question of why people read and enjoy literature, and thus also to more general questions that are relevant for the humanities. If medievalists pooled their many individual and specialised findings about the concept of the literary, they would run a chance on being heard by literary scholars working on later periods and thus make a lasting contribution to literary theory at large. To achieve such a broad perspective, it is important to also take into account those texts that traditionally have not been considered 'literary'. In this context it makes good sense to concentrate on a specific theme and its configurations in order to elicit information about literariness in the medieval period. This volume is devoted to 'sanctity' not just because sanctity is a crucial, recurring theme across a wide range of medieval genres and texts, but because sanctity and the literary are inextricably linked in a dynamic nexus that is ideally suited for gaining insights into the complex functioning of the literary in medieval writing.

Of course literary theory has always implicitly and explicitly been concerned with questions that pertain to the 'literary'. For the Russian formalists, the 'literary' was characterised by a deviation, or estrangement, from ordinary language use and thus largely accessible through linguistic approaches.² The new critics and their practice of close reading placed exclusive emphasis on the literary

work itself and its text-internal aesthetics, relying on a stock of texts deemed 'literary' ('the great tradition' or 'the canon').³ The structuralists, in turn, reduced literature to its structural components, suggesting that a grammatical approach, in other words, an abstraction of form and content, can best encompass literary texts.⁴ Other important theoretical approaches, such as psychoanalytical literary theory, gender studies, post-colonialism, and new historicism have moved further away from analysing the implications of 'literariness'. Instead, they highlight the oftentimes hidden or implicit workings of the unconscious or symbolic, the depiction of gender and the colonised other in literary texts, and the exchanges between literary and cultural history.⁵ For decades, the question of literariness in medieval literature has not been in vogue, possibly because it ostensibly echoes the new critics' focus on aestheticism and thus their narrow, context-excluding close reading. Only recently, as Andrew Galloway points out, 'a new emphasis, if not a movement, has emerged, in which what counts as distinctly literary form and the very category of literature is receiving attention with a focus and energy suggesting a major reorientation of a number of familiar approaches, including historicism, theory, and gender studies'.⁶ This movement has been referred to as 'new formalism'. It is characterised by a historically informed 'rededication' to form and hence centrally concerned with issues of what is meant by literariness and the literary.⁷ Medieval scholarship, however, does not, at least not yet, feature in the debates of new formalism. This may be due to the fact that medievalists have always paid attention to form; hence one looks in vain for predominantly theoretical or programmatic articles that would also be of interest for non-medievalists.⁸

The essays in this volume aim to contribute fundamentally to these more general discussions and trends in literary theory in that they offer a thorough investigation of one specific theme – sanctity – in its implications for literariness in medieval Britain. The only other work to date that is solely devoted to 'the literary' in medieval writing is the already mentioned volume by Grady and Galloway, *Answerable Style* (2013). The thirteen contributors, in Galloway's words, seek 'the literary in history'.⁹ The main authors discussed are Chaucer, Langland, and Gower – obvious choices for explorations of literariness, not least because the status of their works as 'literary' is well established. While it stands to reason to focus on a corpus of texts that is considered literary in order to draw more general conclusions about literary forms

and functions, the essays in our volume start from the opposite direction: the essays in *Sanctity as Literature* all engage with the topic of sanctity, which is used as the focal point for the analysis of literariness. There are several advantages to this approach: for one, the shared theme of ‘sanctity’ ensures that the texts chosen for the analyses are easily comparable as they converge in their more general concerns and patterns. In addition, the corpus of the volume brings together accepted ‘literary’ authors and texts, such as Chaucer, Lydgate, and the Digby *Magdalen*, as well as texts that are often placed on the margins of the literary – for instance Robert Mannyng’s *Handlyng Synne* and saints’ legends. The breadth of genres under consideration allows for a detailed and at the same time representative overview of ‘literariness’ within a thematically well-defined context.

So how are the terms ‘literary’ and ‘literariness’ understood in the contributions to this volume? The two terms clearly relate to the meaning of ‘literature’ in a narrow sense, which John M. Ellis has suggested can be defined by an inverse analogy to ‘weed’: ‘weeds are not particular kinds of plant, but just any kind of plant which for some reason or another a gardener does not want around. Perhaps “literature” means something like the opposite: any kind of writing which for some reason or another somebody values highly’.¹⁰ Which texts are ‘valued highly’ in any given period, however, is subject to change: ‘literariness’ is not a stable category that, once identified, remains the same forever. In fact, it is possible to read any text as a literary; as Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle note, ‘in terms of an enactment of the strange ways of language’.¹¹ At first glance, the phrase ‘an enactment of the strange ways of language’ appears to recall Russian formalists’ and new critics’ ideas. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that it goes further: the ‘strange ways of language’ are not restricted to literature but, on the contrary, can be performed (‘enacted’) in order to *create* the literary – or, rather, literary effects in the first place.

Such a performance-based approach to the literary, which requires both formal, text-internal cues *and* the readers’ input and recognition of these features as literary, also underlies the essays in this volume. Our contributors explore instances of a singularity which, according to Derek Attridge, is a constitutive feature of literariness: this singularity, not to be equated with ‘uniqueness’, is an event that is produced in the processes of reception and ‘always open to contamination, grafting, accidents, reinterpretation, and recontextualization. Nor is it inimitable: on the contrary, it is

eminently imitable, and may give rise to a host of imitations'.¹² Tentatively, then, one might define 'the literary' as 'the potential possessed by a body of texts for a certain effectivity, a potential realized differently – or not at all – in different times and places'.¹³ In focusing on 'a certain effectivity' that is created by the texts themselves, Attridge criticises what he calls the 'instrumentalist' view of literature. By 'instrumentalist' he means 'the treating of a text ... as a means to a predetermined end'.¹⁴ Medievalists are familiar with such a treatment of their objects of study. Whenever scholars go to a medieval text in order to validate arguments about wider cultural processes, historical events, and biographical information, the text is treated as a means to an end rather than as an entity, or rather, performance in its own right.¹⁵

Texts about sanctity, saints' lives in particular, have often fallen prey to an instrumentalist approach: many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars working on medieval hagiography denied the genre any literary value, stressing instead the archaeological importance of the texts.¹⁶ In the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries, scholars implicitly reiterated their predecessors' bias by drawing on hagiography as a valuable source of information on historical and political events, aspects of gender, the education of women, and practices of devotion, rather than concentrating on the narrative and literary qualities of hagiographic works.¹⁷ Following Attridge, *Sanctity as Literature* explicitly attempts to offer a different approach – one that resists an instrumental perspective, instead opening up new ways of reading this kind of literature, so often experienced as alien to modern sensibilities. To read sanctity as literature means to foreground the non-instrumentality of the texts under consideration and to put emphasis on those textual elements that are functional primarily with respect to the status of the text as a literary one.

A significant element in the creative process that brings forth a work of literature is the testing and pushing of limits on the basis of the well-known and familiar:

The creative mind can work only with the materials to which it has access, and it can have no certain knowledge beyond these; it therefore has to operate without being sure of where it is going, probing the limits of the culture's givens, taking advantage of their contradictions and tensions, seeking hints of the exclusions on which they depend for their existence, exploring the effects upon them of encounters with the products and practices of other cultures.¹⁸

Literary history in essence is the grand narrative of the trials and errors of recreating and refashioning writing. The processes that underlie these transformations of genres are by no means teleological but more like a web of roots diffusely spreading out. The practices of repetition, emulation, and innovation can be risky because the impact of a refashioned work is difficult to foresee. Medieval authors who set out to recreate the discourses of the holy were particularly vulnerable to criticism. The most 'risky' genre in this context was perhaps hagiography, the patterns of which were well-established for centuries and took their validation from the Church.¹⁹

In practice, however, late medieval authors such as Lydgate or Capgrave were very successful in introducing innovative changes to saints' legends, which altered the ways in which saintly exemplarity were depicted considerably.²⁰ The authors' success is intimately tied in with the changing values of the rising *studia humanitatis* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This new movement, both a revival of classical literature as aesthetic inspiration and a concept of kindness, led to a change in the attitudes to reading and writing as well as to the creation and reception of literary composition.²¹ Importantly, these changes were not confined to Latin literature. Hence one could speak of a 'vernacular humanism' characterised by humane, rational, anthropocentric, and secular qualities.²² The late medieval hagiographers reinterpreted their hagiographic contents against the background of the classics, thus introducing a new literariness to their subject matter while still preserving the orthodox claims that underlie the protagonists' sanctity. Several of the essays in this volume illuminate, explicitly or implicitly, aspects of hagiography and hagiographic discourse in relation to this nascent vernacular humanism. Thus, Sarah James argues that John Capgrave, whose work has been repeatedly judged as lacking any literary value, engages self-consciously not only with Chaucer, but also with classical works in his *Life of St Katherine*, an engagement that seems to have been novel in fifteenth-century hagiographic discourse ('Reading classical authors in Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*'). James shows that Capgrave integrates references to classical authors – Virgil's *Georgics* in particular – at crucial points in the narrative in which Katherine's character and importance as role model are thematised. In other words, Capgrave uses Katherine's sanctity in order to implement features of a new literariness.

Another fifteenth-century hagiographer whose saints' legends have found little acknowledgement is John Lydgate. His work too

can be placed in the context of the emerging vernacular humanism, as Anke Bernau demonstrates in her contribution to this volume, ‘Lydgate’s saintly poetics’ (Chapter 8). Scrutinising the *Life of Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*, Bernau argues that Lydgate uses sanctity as an authorising strategy for developing a specific ‘saintly poetics’. The elements of this poetics comprise the discourse of laureation, the frequent employment of ‘colours’, and a carefully calibrated temporal framework. The laurel, for instance, links both the saints and, crucially, Lydgate himself to classical as well as more recent figures such as heroes, rulers, and eminent authors. Hence, as part of this saintly poetics, the writer’s task is aligned with the saints’ achievements. The frequent references to colours, which run thread-like through the whole narrative, create associative clusters between individuals – that is, between the saints, Lydgate, and the Christian community. This poetics, according to Eva von Contzen, can be linked with Lydgate’s reinterpretation of hagiography as a playground for exploring form rather than narrative development (‘Narrating vernacular sanctity: the *Scottish Legendary* as a challenge to the “literary turn” in fifteenth-century hagiography’). Comparing Lydgate’s narrative strategies of sanctity with those used in both the *Scottish Legendary* (c. 1390) and Chaucer’s *Second Nun’s Tale*, von Contzen in Chapter 9 argues that in the late fourteenth century sanctity was dependent on narrative and in fact instrumental *because* it followed a specific agenda of developing sanctity through narrative means.

Focusing in more detail on ‘Chaucer and hagiographic authority’ in Chapter 6, Jennifer Sisk reconsiders not the *Second Nun’s Tale*, which is often regarded as the first literary saint’s legend in English, but Chaucer’s uses of sanctity in three other ‘pseudo-hagiographic’ tales (in Sisk’s words) told on the way to Canterbury: the *Man of Law’s Tale*, the *Clerk’s Tale*, and the *Physician’s Tale*. Sisk argues that Chaucer uses the contested theme of sanctity in these three tales in order to develop authorising strategies that are alternative to hagiographic authority. This, however, is an enterprise bound to fail as the three tales, or rather, the poet, lack the fundamental claims of authority available in hagiography. Hence the tales problematise the authorising claims of the literary by deconstructing hagiography in a non-religious context in which authority is subject to negotiation in the first place and characterised by the indeterminacy of interpretation.

Quite different strategies of authorising are in the centre of the hagio-biographies of Thomas More. Anna Siebach Larsen, in

'The humanist grammar of sanctity in the early *Lives* of Thomas More' (Chapter 11 of this volume), concentrates on the agonising process of valorising the intellectual while at the same time insisting upon More's sanctity as martyr. Larsen argues that in the *Lives* by Roper, Harpsfield, Stapleton, and Cresacre, four texts which are self-consciously liminal in accommodating traditional hagiographic tropes with the demands of a humanist saint, the 'grammar' of humanism and the 'grammar' of sanctity coincide. More's sanctity is constructed firmly from within the text in a network of classical as well as contemporary writers. More as a public persona and author becomes the prerequisite and necessary foil for More the martyr. In rewriting and at the same time merging two discourses – the hagiographic and the biographical – the authors of More's *Lives* create a new genre with literary aspirations that seek to satisfy both the needs of a humanist audience and the Catholic community.

The elements Bernau (Chapter 8), von Contzen (Chapter 9), James (Chapter 7) and Larsen (Chapter 11) identify as the building blocks of the literary can be linked with the more general cultural processes Julia Reinhard Lupton has termed the 'passion of secularisation'.²³ According to Lupton, hagiography had to be subsumed into new genres in order to secure its permanent place in literary history as the spiritual mother of many modern genres: in parallel to the classical revival in hagiography, saints' lives and their motifs were secularised and subsequently turned into a typology that allowed for their use from the Renaissance onwards. Lupton has demonstrated the ways in which hagiographic motifs such as trial, martyrdom or relics become 'citable images' in later writings, which employ the motifs detached from their original contexts.²⁴ The emerging literariness of hagiographic writings forms the first step in the process of secularising sanctity, separating the concept from its institutionally defined truth claims. It becomes obvious that medieval hagiographers, but also other writers who engaged in discourses of the holy, occupied a prominent position owing to their subject matter, a position that could even leave a lasting mark on subsequent literary works. Against this backdrop, the need for scrutinising the literary in medieval literature becomes all the more relevant. Any analysis of the forms and functions of the literary is meaningless without keeping the larger cultural and historical trajectories in mind.

That hagiography has turned out to become such a powerful resource for later genres is hardly a coincidence: its power derives

from the implications of its major theme, sanctity. At first glance it may seem unusual to search for literariness in texts dealing with sanctity: of course sanctity is a ubiquitous theme in medieval writing, but as it is fundamentally based on the truth claims of the Christian Church, it seems to be an unlikely candidate for medieval authors' creative explorations. The textual evidence, however, suggests the opposite: precisely *because* sanctity is intimately tied up with truth claims and the authority of the Church, it provides an excellent field for experimentation with the literary. In fact, 'sanctity' and 'literature' as potentially precarious concepts have much in common: they both require validation and authorisation. Sanctity is an attribution, a set of qualities ascribed to people considered special by other members of the same community of belief. Similarly, literature is the attribution of a set of features to a text considered special by a community of participants in a metaphorical sense – authors, readers, scholars. Yet the precariousness of the two concepts can lead to effective power once their status has been successfully established and validated. The rootedness of sanctity in the authoritative context of the Church guarantees, or promises to guarantee, a stability and continuity that large institutions seek and seek to perpetuate. Hence the very topic of sanctity seems to be a 'stable' one: stable because it implies the auspices of the Church and because its implications form part of society's accepted norms. D. Vance Smith has argued that one can conceptualise 'writing as the act of *instituting*, breaking not from an institution of writing – that is, literature – but from institutions of being, in which being is contained, represented, held, for the sake of individuals'.²⁵ According to Smith, 'the institutions produced within the written' can be found within the texts themselves: 'the form of a work – something about its *literary* quality – allows us to discover its own institution'.²⁶ In the late Middle Ages, the processes of such an institutionalising in and through writing led towards a first tentative establishment of 'literature' as an institution. Its features are the various instances of the literary as they are also identified in the essays that follow (see below in more detail). It makes good sense to develop and probe a new, creative institution within the boundaries of another, existing institution: to push their limits, writers require limits in the first place.

Another reason why sanctity is a productive category that allows medieval writers to explore the literary is the notion of authority. Texts dealing with sanctity frequently assume, rather than require, authorisation: by being a saint, the saint has already been

authorised. All the author needs to do, therefore, is present the 'facts'. Texts about sanctity are self-sufficient in their authoritative claims; hence it stands to reason that the texts do not need, and even forbid, the authors' creative input. The authors under discussion, however, do exactly this. Does the saintliness of the saint 'guarantee' the text to such an extent that it *allows* the writer to experiment? Perhaps more than in other contexts, writers who depict holy men and women are confronted with questions of their own role and influence *as writers* in the composition of a work and its reception. Even though texts dealing with sanctity are usually characterised by exemplarity and hence by non-individuality, they raise fundamental questions about individual behaviour. Coupled with the writers' role in creating sanctity through textual means, the medieval preoccupation with the holy is symptomatic of what seems to be one of the central functions of literature: in Bennett and Royle's words, the 'capacity to question, defamiliarize and even transform the sense of who or what we are'.²⁷ Sanctity is a matter of religious identity, and even if it typically resolves in the suspension or abandonment of selfhood in God, 'sanctity' is the central concept around which questions of individual and group identity, patterns of behaviour, and social roles evolve. One might argue that in relatively stable, institutionally well defined genres, such as hagiography or saint's plays, sanctity can function as a foil against which authors can explore and experiment with their own aspirations and intentions as *auctores* who have an undeniable impact on the text they are creating. In less strictly sanctioned contexts such as the *Canterbury Tales* or Margery Kempe's *Book*, the concept of sanctity itself may be put to the test in order to discuss a wider range of patterns of action and behaviour.

The precise features that create literariness can vary strongly from text to text. Among these features one could list narrative voices that display a strong sense of self-consciousness, perhaps even self-confidence, the innovative uses of traditional material, and the employment of new metaphors and other poetic devices in novel ways. Each of the twelve essays in this volume adds further features to the list. Since the literary is such a complicated and debatable concept, not all of the contributors use the terms 'literariness' or 'the literary'. Alternative terms that occur frequently across the essays are 'poetics', 'narrative strategy', 'imaginative agenda', and, following Nicolette Zeeman, 'imaginative theory', the latter term describing a theory that is alternative to and independent from scholastic theories.²⁸ What these terms

have in common is that they imply a conscious and purposeful employment of textual means, an employment that follows some kind of superordinate aim or plan. Another suitable term would be 'programme': many of the essays in the volume at hand demonstrate the strategic uses of literariness. For instance, in her essay entitled 'St Margaret and the literary politics of Scottish sainthood' (Chapter 1), Kate Ash demonstrates how authors shaped the depiction of Margaret of Scotland's sanctity according to historical and cultural needs in order to present her as a role model. While the early, twelfth-century accounts of the saint's life and miracles, notably Bishop Turgot's *vita*, stage her as perfect medieval queen, she is depicted almost as a patron saint in the fifteenth century. In the *Scotichronicon*, Walter Bower imagines Margaret as an image of Scottish sovereignty. Choosing not to present Margaret's *vita* in full but rather to concentrate on selected representative segments from her life, Bower creates emblematic scenes that not only evoke other genres (the dream vision, for instance), but also suggestively put Margaret in the position of a patron saint for Scotland.

The problematic relationship between secular knighthood and sanctity as it comes to fore in the depiction of soldier saints is another case of strategically employed literariness, as Andrew Lynch argues in his contribution 'Good knights and holy men: reading the virtue of soldier-saints in medieval literary genres' (Chapter 2). Soldier saints represent secular power, while the status as saints to which they aspire requires their resistance to precisely these powers. Through the concept of knighthood, then, sanctity is renegotiated. Medieval authors employed a range of literary means to inscribe chivalric motifs and values in saints' lives, and, vice versa, hagiographic motifs and characters in romances. Drawing on a range of texts – mystery play cycles, Arthurian romance, the *South English Legendary* – Lynch demonstrates that these inter-textual or cross-narrative elements are much more than superficial convergences between two genres which share certain aspects in terms of their contents. Rather, romance and hagiography follow essentially different literary strategies in the depiction of knighthood and chivalry. Whereas piety can augment the prestige of knighthood in romances (and does not question it), the soldier saint recognises the inferiority of earthly knighthood and reaches a superior form of excellence. Hence, Lynch concludes, in the treatment of 'good knights', 'a major ideological point of variance' between romance and hagiography comes to the fore.

Kate Greenspan discusses in [Chapter 3](#) an aspect of hagiography that is more widely recognised: its didacticism ('Englishing the saints in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*'). However, in *Handlyng Synne* the didacticism is directed towards stimulating national fervour. Literariness plays a key part in this enterprise. Greenspan shows that Robert Mannyng follows an educational agenda geared to what he considered the needs of his English audience. As a crucial part of his agenda, Mannyng rewrites the lives of the saints he uses as exempla in order to make them appear predominantly 'English' in their setting and concerns, which is fundamentally an act of creating literariness. Greenspan argues that the changes Mannyng introduced to his rendering of the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez* appropriated tropes from romances and fabliaux (on the level of form) in order to familiarise the stories of the saints for an English audience (on the level of content). Here, literariness refers to the process of creatively adapting and re-narrativising the hagiographic tales.

In 'Body and soul: from doctrine to debate in medieval Welsh and Irish literature' ([Chapter 5](#)), Helen Fulton sheds new light on the literariness of debate poetry. The twelfth-century debates between body and soul implicitly and explicitly thematise sanctity as the ideal model for behaviour that guarantees admission to Heaven. Yet sanctity is a status only very few achieve – the majority of believers have to face the corruptions of the body. In these debates, the soul urges the audience to aspire to a way of life that is modelled on an established pattern of holy conduct. The Irish and Welsh traditions of the debate between body and soul are shown to vary in their employment of literary features: Irish texts exhibit visionary elements to a greater extent, while Welsh poems foreground the debate itself. In both cases, the texts fulfil didactic and doctrinal functions. The literary potential of the genre further becomes evident in the fact that other genres creatively reuse aspects of the body-soul debate. Examples of these reuses are the vision tale 'The Vision of Adamnán' in Ireland, and Iolo Goch's court poetry in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Wales.

While the voices that speak in the body-and-soul poems are allegorical and hence abstracted from any individual beings, the voices in mystical writing present themselves as individual, anchored in personal experience. Jessica Barr argues in [Chapter 4](#) that in this context, writers employ literary strategies that centre around a self-consciously fashioned 'I' in order to create textual authority ('Modelling holiness: self-fashioning and sanctity in late-medieval

English mystical literature'). The strategies associated with these narrative personae engage with contemporary notions of sanctity. As Barr demonstrates, Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe all negotiate their claims of holiness in their own ways. Rolle constructs his 'I' so that it can function as a placeholder for every reader, while Julian and Margery emphasise the personal and individual in their experiences. All three authors seek to invite the audience's participation in responding affectively to the suffering of Christ as a perfected model of sanctity.

Turning to early English drama, Tamara Atkin shows how sanctity is constructed in two different dramatic versions of the life of Mary Magdalen: the Digby *Mary Magdalen* and Lewis Wager's mid-sixteenth-century *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* ('Reforming sanctity: the Digby *Mary Magdalen* and Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*', [Chapter 10](#)). Atkin argues that both plays try to come to terms with the potential anxiety of embodying sacred knowledge on stage, an anxiety that complicates the processes of authorisation and hence the depiction of Mary's sanctity. Literariness in this context encompasses the written text as well as the performance; the audience comprises both the readers of the manuscript and the spectators. Atkin argues that the Digby *Mary Magdalen* anchors Mary's sanctity in her body. The sinner's bodiliness continues to be emphasised even after her conversion and thus offers a readable sign for her holiness that is based upon the rejection of her sinful body. The consequent visualisation of holiness, which results in a spectacle, is carefully planned in order to reach a late medieval audience in need of spiritual instruction. Wager's Reformation play, by contrast, rejects spectacle in favour of adhering more closely to Mary's depiction in Scripture and thus locates the saint's holiness in the written text rather than the visual or the saint's body. Atkin demonstrates that both the Digby author(s) and Wager consciously engage with their role as playwrights and seek to negotiate, and ultimately justify, their dramaturgical choices for the performance of sanctity.

What emerges from this overview is that late medieval literature concerned with sanctity could be said to be instrumental in that the literariness it creates and enacts is typically employed in order to achieve certain aims. These aims are both 'literary' and 'spiritual'. While Attridge's understanding of instrumentality refers mainly to how consumers of literature use literary texts in order to pursue certain aims, the instrumentality that arguably becomes evident throughout this volume could be said to be of a more 'internal'

nature, inscribed in the texts themselves through their particular form and structure. In the afterword ‘Calendar time in *balade* form’ (Chapter 12), Catherine Sanok problematises the topic of the volume by focusing on the intricate relationship of form and function. Starting from the example of an instrumental passage – a *kalende* of how to say 11,000 Pater noster in one year – in Osborn Bokenham’s legend of *Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins*, Sanok argues that literary form can provide the key to understanding the complex relationship between literature and religion. Sanok explicitly rejects claims that literature necessarily presupposes or requires secularisation. Instead, she argues, literary form is used to negotiate and ultimately to reconcile the ostensibly antithetical categories of the sacred and the secular. The pivotal element is time: literary categories coordinate narrative time, the temporal structure of the world, and heavenly timelessness. Examples in which secular and religious time are thus negotiated can be found in love lyric, romance (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), dream vision (*Pearl*) – and, perhaps most poignantly, in texts that specifically engage with sanctity. We, as readers and scholars, are invited to mobilise the meaning of late medieval texts about sanctity as performances of the literary. As contributors, we found that doing so led to new insights into what ‘literature’ and ‘the literary’ might mean and do.

Notes

- 1 Andrew Galloway, ‘The Medieval Literary’, in Frank Grady and Andrew Galloway (eds), *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2013), pp. 1–12, at p. 2.
- 2 See e.g. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (eds), *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965) and P.N. Medvedev and M.M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
- 3 See e.g. Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, 1947); William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930); Crowe Ransom, *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1951); I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1924); K.W. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).
- 4 See e.g. Claude Bremond, *Logique du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1973); Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell

- University Press, 1980); Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings*, 7 vols (The Hague: Mouton, 1981); Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966).
- 5 See e.g. Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *Allegory and Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* (London: Tavistock, 1977); Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
 - 6 Galloway, 'The Medieval Literary', p. 1.
 - 7 See the overview of the movement's strands and development in Marjorie Levinson, 'What is New Formalism?', *PMLA* 122.2 (2007), pp. 558–69. Levinson refers to the above-mentioned 'rededication' at p. 561.
 - 8 Since new formalism is a movement and not a theory (cf. Levinson, 'What is New Formalism', p. 560), it allows for a very free handling of existing approaches. Hence an alteration of the methods available for post-medieval works, which Galloway suggests ('The Medieval Literary', p. 2), is not really an issue for medievalists.
 - 9 Galloway, 'The Medieval Literary', p. 7.
 - 10 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), p. 8.
 - 11 Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 4th edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2009), pp. 89–90.
 - 12 Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 63.
 - 13 Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, p. 59.
 - 14 Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, p. 7.
 - 15 That there are good reasons for instrumentalising literature in this vein goes without saying: in the current crisis of the humanities, medievalists are more frequently forced to defend the usefulness or relevance of their work.
 - 16 Symptomatic of this treatment are the editors of John Capgrave's hagiographic works; see Sarah James in this volume, Chapter 7, at pp. 134–5.
 - 17 For socio-historical and political approaches, see e.g. Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Simon Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham', *Speculum* 82 (2007), pp. 932–49; and Klaus Jankofsky, 'National

Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (eds), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 81–93. Examples of gender-based studies are Gail Ashton, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (London: Routledge, 2000); Catherine Innes-Parker, 'Sexual Violence and the Female Reader: Symbolic "Rape" in the Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group', *Women's Studies* 24.3 (1995), pp. 205–17; Katherine J. Lewis, 'Model Girls? Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Women in Late Medieval England', in Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge, and Kim M. Phillips (eds), *Young Medieval Women* (New York: St Martin's, 1999), pp. 25–46; Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000); Catherine M. Mooney (ed.), *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Samantha Riches and Sarah Salih (eds), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2002); Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300: Virginity and Its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The textuality of hagiography is considered, for instance, in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *The Invention of Saintliness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

- 18 Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, p. 20.
- 19 The mystics too put themselves in a potentially precarious position in their claims of having access to the divine.
- 20 See Karen A. Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 336–51, at p. 338. Scholars who have prominently addressed these changes and discussed the cultural grounding of the depiction and functions of the holy include Delany, *Impolitic Bodies*; Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48; and Sanok, *Her Life Historical*.
- 21 Cf. Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 6–7.
- 22 See Wakelin, *Humanism*, pp. 6–7. Another term used in that context is 'medieval humanism', which Wakelin rejects as it misleadingly suggests a strict border and disconnection between medieval and

- Renaissance forms of humanism and fails to acknowledge its continuity. For the concept of vernacular humanism, see also Andrew Galloway, 'John Lydgate and the Origins of Vernacular Humanism', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107.4 (2008), pp. 445–71.
- 23 Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. xxi. The 'passion of secularisation', which implies that the processes that underlie the secularising of saintly discourse can be an agonising and fraught process, is a central concept in many of the articles; see especially Bernau, Larsen, and Sanok.
- 24 Cf. Lupton, *Afterlives*, pp. xxxi, 43.
- 25 D. Vance Smith, 'Institutions', in Strohm, *Middle English*, pp. 160–76, at p. 165.
- 26 Smith, 'Institutions', p. 165.
- 27 Bennett and Royle, *Introduction to Literature*, p. 129. See similarly Joseph Hillis Miller, *Reading Narrative* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), pp. 172–3.
- 28 Cf. Nicolette Zeeman, 'Imaginative Theory', in Strohm, *Middle English*, pp. 222–40. For other important studies that deal with questions of 'the literary' in medieval literature, see e.g. Anne Middleton, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II', *Speculum* 53 (1978), pp. 94–114; 'Chaucer's "New Men" and the Good of Literature in the *Canterbury Tales*', in Edward W. Said (ed.), *Literature and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 15–56; Rita Copeland, *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); David Lawton, 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century', *English Literary History* 54.4 (1987), pp. 761–99; Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

St Margaret and the literary politics of Scottish sainthood

Kate Ash

Canonised in 1250, Queen Margaret of Scotland is perhaps one of the most familiar Scottish saints to modern readers, yet surprisingly little material relating to her life (beyond brief mentions in chronicles) survives from the Middle Ages. Furthermore, there has been little scholarly consideration of the literariness of representations of Margaret. What work has been done focuses on Margaret as a historical figure, or uses material relating to her sanctity as evidence for the existence of particular sites of veneration within Scotland. These studies are useful for understanding Margaret's role in Scotland in historical and religious terms, and suggest avenues for exploration of the literary material concerning both her earthly and heavenly lives. This chapter traces some of the development of the literature written about Saint Margaret, concentrating on the literary and political use of her memory in the fifteenth century. Given that little substantial literary treatment of Margaret survives, I use 'literature' here in its broadest sense, considering writings about Margaret in her 'official' life story, in miracle stories concerning her healing powers, and in chronicle material that gives extended narratives of visions of St Margaret. I suggest that changing interpretations of Margaret of Scotland's sanctity determined how she was remembered and (re)created in the few texts written about her that have survived. I will indicate that, from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, there was a shift towards reading about Margaret's miracles rather than her life as a perfect queen, and that what becomes evident is a move away from writing about Margaret's life as a whole to a concentration on particular aspects of her sanctity that fit more aptly an author's imaginative agenda. For while the composition of a full *vita* or series of *miracula* might have occurred to support canonisation proceedings, the style of collection and an author's desire to narrate fantastical and captivating stories indicate that a concern with literary compo-

sition itself was also a significant factor in the production of these texts. I propose that what emerges in the fifteenth century are writings about St Margaret of Scotland which change the emphasis of her sanctity from that espoused in the extant twelfth-century *vita*. The twelfth-century written creation of Margaret existed as testament to her as the perfect medieval queen; by the fifteenth century, the focus of her sanctity lay in her miraculous works and in the possibilities for reimagining Margaret as an inspirational figure for Scottish sovereignty, a figure akin to a patron saint.

I begin with a discussion of early medieval literature relating to the sanctity of Margaret, notably Bishop Turgot's *vita* commissioned by her daughter in the twelfth century, ascertaining its influence on later depictions of the queen. The other significant early text to survive is a fifteenth-century copy of a thirteenth-century *Miracula*, focusing on the posthumous miracles that occurred either at Margaret's shrine at Dunfermline or in relation to her saintly role. Finally, I look at how Margaret's sanctity is reimagined in one of the longest works of Scottish history compiled in the 1440s: Walter Bower's *Scotichronicon*. I argue that Bower's desire to create a history of Scotland that focused on identity politics meant that Margaret became for him a figure not only of sanctity but also of Scottish culture, and even Scottish identity or patriotism. While texts from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries depict Margaret as a figure of what Karen Winstead calls 'saintly exemplarity', the ways in which these texts interpret what it meant to be saintly in a Scottish context differs greatly.¹ Margaret as *exemplum* is understood quite differently in Turgot and Bower's narratives, as well as in the *Miracula*. As a result, it is possible to see that writing about saints in medieval Scotland was the focus of myriad literary endeavours and emphases.

Born in Hungary c. 1045, Margaret was the eldest child of the exiled Edward Atheling (d. 1057), and the granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, the Anglo-Saxon king defeated by Cnut in 1016. The family returned to England in 1057, where Edward died a year later and his son, Edgar Atheling, was not considered as a successor of Edward the Confessor, who died childless in 1066. After William, Duke of Normandy had claimed the English throne it seems that Margaret's family briefly came under the Duke's protection. However, they became involved in resisting the Norman invaders and in 1068 Margaret was forced to seek 'shelter' in Scotland along with her mother and siblings. She married the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore in 1069 or 1070.² Of Anglo-Saxon

heritage, then, Margaret might seem an unlikely figure of Scottish identity and devotion, but that is precisely what Scottish writers shaped her into being – with different emphases – following her death and subsequent canonisation.

Margaret's life is first written about in the twelfth century. There are two surviving versions of the *Life of St Margaret*, a short version and a long version.³ The long version (BL, Cotton Tiberius Diii) appears to have been written for Margaret's daughter Matilda, who married Henry I of England, by Margaret's confessor Bishop Turgot, prior of Durham.⁴ In the prologue to the *vita*, Turgot indicates that Matilda made 'the request' to offer her 'in writing the story of the life of your mother'.⁵ In fulfilling the request of Matilda, Turgot's *vita* of St Margaret of Scotland begins with the traditional tropes of the author being commanded to write the text, employing the modesty topos, whereby Turgot professes his 'lack of ability' and his anxiety that he 'cannot do justice' to his subject.⁶ Immediately, then, Turgot draws attention to the literariness of his endeavour to write a life of the saintly queen, using the form of the early medieval *vita* to promote the sanctity of its (as yet uncanonised) subject. Turgot's text deliberately conforms to many of the generic expectations of twelfth-century hagiography: the practice of asceticism (so far as is possible for a queen) and humility; the performing of good works that lead to sanctity; proof of holiness in victorious death, in Margaret's case by preparing well for death and happily embracing it. Dominic Alexander, in his analysis of the eremitical writings of Durham Cathedral Priory, indicates that twelfth-century Durham was 'not poor in its literary output', which itself 'reflected upon a considerable educated tradition surrounding the cult' of St Cuthbert, who features in the *vita* as an object of veneration connected with priestly oblations offered for Margaret's soul.⁷ It is not outwith the realms of possibility that Turgot was influenced by this literary activity at Durham and that this literary heritage of saintly writing had a considerable impact on his own narrative of St Margaret, which owes as much to the 'tradition of its past as a literary form' as it does to 'the actual life of its subject',⁸ despite Turgot's insistence that he 'add[s] nothing to the truth' of the queen's life.⁹ In Turgot's rendering, Margaret's sanctity is visible by the fact that he can draw so explicitly on hagiographical modes of writing without having to 'invent' stories of miracles to support the vision of Margaret that the text presents.

In his *vita*, Turgot goes to great lengths to portray Margaret as the epitome of queenly perfection, emphasising her noble heritage

as well as her life as a queen and mother. Margaret's heritage comes not only from her own royal lineage, but also from the saintly figures with which she is aligned: St Peter the Rock, John the Divine, and the sons of Zebedee.¹⁰ Turgot parallels Margaret with the founder of the Church and those renowned for preaching the gospel. She is also later imagined as 'another Esther' who understood that beneath the 'gems and gold' of nobility there was 'but dust and ashes'.¹¹ As such, Margaret's sanctity is identified through a matrix of associations that focus on the foundations of the Church itself. To this list, the author adds Margaret the pearl, playing on the common medieval association of Margaret and *marguerite*. For Turgot, Margaret showed herself to be a 'pearl, precious in faith and works',¹² a 'noble gem'¹³ who was 'seasoned with the salt of wisdom',¹⁴ echoing St Paul's recommendations of the pious life and the virtues of prayer.¹⁵ Margaret is not merely a good queen; she is the embodiment of Scriptural piety whose names, actions and intellect live out the saintly ideal.

The final sections of the *vita* focus on Margaret's piety, where her sanctity is performed through action rather than by miracles. While Turgot draws heavily on the hagiographic form in the creation of a narrative of perfect queenship, at the same time he shies away from illustrating Margaret's sanctity through miracles. Turgot's literary creation of Margaret seems to be concerned with 'provable' biography rather than with creating a figure known for the performance of the miraculous. Turgot comments that he will 'leave it to others to admire the tokens of miracles which they see elsewhere', resolving to 'admire much more the works of mercy which [he] perceived in Margaret'.¹⁶ While the distinction between biography and hagiography is not always clearly made in medieval literature, Turgot's texts seems to encourage biographical rather than hagiographical reading at this point, or perhaps, more specifically, the reader is encouraged to venerate Margaret's earthly, rather than her saintly, exemplarity. The one miracle that Turgot does include is that of the survival of Margaret's gospel book, which having fallen into a stream appeared to suffer no damage. The book was sought after for a 'long time' and eventually discovered 'lying open at the bottom of the river'.¹⁷ Turgot recounts how its leaves 'had been kept in constant motion by the action of the water' and that the 'little coverings of silk which protected the letters of gold' had been 'swept away by the force of the current'.¹⁸ When the book is recovered, it is found 'uninjured' and 'so free from damage' that 'it looked as if it had not been touched by the water'.¹⁹

At this point Turgot appears to draw upon the legends of St Cuthbert's uncorrupted body and his unblemished gospel book. In 698 Cuthbert's tomb on Lindisfarne had been opened, revealing his uncorrupted body. This was followed by reports of miracles occurring at his shrine. In the wake of Viking raids on Lindisfarne, Cuthbert's body was removed and was eventually reinterred at Durham. In 1107, it was claimed that the tomb of St Cuthbert had been opened and, along with the saint's perfectly intact body, an unblemished gospel book (now British Library MS Add. 89000) was discovered. It is possible that Turgot was influenced by the saint most closely associated with his own religious house, and chose to strengthen the already close associations between Durham and St Margaret by embellishing the miracle of her own unblemished gospel book. The image of Margaret's book, however, also serves to reflect the image of Margaret as pure and untouched by the waters of the world. Of course, it must be remembered that at the time of the composition of the *vita* Margaret had not been canonised, and the intention of the work seems to be to present an image of saintly queenship, a model for the text's recipient. Yet, in leaving others to 'observe the tokens' of miracles, Turgot also seems to exhibit a wariness of hagiographic motifs at the moment that Margaret's sanctity might become visible through them. Resisting a reading of Margaret herself as a worker of miracles, Turgot's *vita* effects Margaret's sanctity through God's approval of her pious nature: Turgot believes that this 'wonder' was 'worked by our Lord out of His love for this venerable queen'.²⁰ While Turgot consciously creates an image of St Margaret of Scotland that demonstrates how her life led to sanctity, there is a distinct lack of 'transitive' miracles (ones that benefited others) and miraculous power is clearly associated with Divine approval of Margaret's piety. This is quite different to the reinvention of the tradition of Margaret in the later Middle Ages.

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries there appears to have been little hagiographical writing concerning St Margaret of Scotland; certainly very little survives. In the mid-thirteenth century, a collection of Margaret's miracles was composed. The *Miracula S. Margarite Scotorum regine* is extant in MS Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, II. 2097, fols 26–41v, where it sits alongside a heavily interpolated version of Turgot's *vita* of the queen, Jocelin of Furness's *Vita S. Vallei abbatis de Melros*, and miscellaneous devotional pieces.²¹ This compilation dates from the reign of James III (1460–88) and was most likely copied

from an exemplar at Dunfermline, now lost. As Robert Bartlett observes, the miscellaneous religious pieces in the manuscript 'reflect interests similar to those exemplified in the list of books from Dunfermline drawn up in the early fourteenth century, where patristic and monastic texts dominate'.²² He also notes that the production of this manuscript fits into a wider picture of considerable copying in the scriptorium at Dunfermline and the 'interest there in both historical and devotional writing', which saw the compilation of the *Liber Pluscardensis* in 1461.²³ That the manuscript then includes a version of the earlier *vita* and the miracles of St Margaret might further indicate a Dunfermline context for its composition.²⁴ It also suggests a fifteenth-century creation of a corpus of related texts concerning Margaret's sanctity, designed to be read alongside other devotional works.

The *Miracula* of St Margaret contains accounts of forty-five miracles and, while it contains an account of an earlier translation of Margaret's remains in 1180, remarkably does not include the translation in 1250 which followed her canonisation. Its copying into a fifteenth-century collection suggests perhaps a desire to preserve and disseminate the devotional writing relating to Margaret and to situate veneration of the Scottish queen within a more fully realised religious practice. Furthermore, Bartlett comments that whoever the author of the *Miracula* was, he had an 'impressive command of Latin prose, exhibiting great narrative verve and stylistic energy'.²⁵ Most striking, perhaps, is the predominance of female agentive nouns in '-trix' throughout the *Miracula*. While this is not uncommon practice in the hagiography of female saints, St Margaret's author uses them more often than is perhaps expected. Margaret is figured, among other images, as *auxiliatrix* (she who aids), *consolatrix* (comforter), *consultrix* (provider), *instigatrix* (she who instigates), and *liberatrix* (she who releases). The effect is to foreground and reinforce Margaret's sanctity in the performance of miracles of which she is the agent, as opposed to the conduit, of Divine action.

This is certainly true of Walter Bower's fifteenth-century imagining of St Margaret, and he is a writer who clearly rewrites and reimagines Margaret's sanctity in his *Scotichronicon*, a Latin chronicle composed in the 1440s while Bower was abbot at the Augustinian house on the island of Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth near Aberdour, West Fife. Originally commissioned by Sir David Stewart of Rosyth, a neighbouring laird of Inchcolm Abbey, the text survives in six full and five abbreviated

texts. The copy belonging to the abbey itself (now Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 171) was a fair copy that appears to have become Bower's working text. This paper manuscript comprises 391 folios and is described by D.E.R. Watt as 'the most elaborate work of literature to survive from before the Reformation of 1560 in Scotland'. Watt's reference to *Scotichronicon* as 'literature' understands the term as writing in general, although he identifies Bower's text as enriching the history of Scotland with 'literary embellishments' at a time when 'passages of reflection based on literary allusions and parallels' from both classical and early medieval authors were commonly being used in Scotland.²⁶

Bower's initial aim for writing the *Scotichronicon* was to transcribe a copy of John of Fordun's *Chronicle* (1370s) in five books and to continue it, making use of Fordun's *Annals*. Fordun's *Chronicle* covered the history of the Scots from their mythical origin through Gaythelos and Scota, to the death of David I in 1153. The *Annals* cover the two hundred years between 1153 and the 1370s, in more limited detail. Bower's *Scotichronicon* supplements Fordun's material and continues the history of the Scots to the death of James I in 1437. Almost all of the material relating to St Margaret is Bower's addition. This suggests that Bower had an interest in St Margaret that John of Fordun did not share, or that he saw the historiographic and literary potential of depicting Margaret's sanctity for his work. Bower's text is extremely organised, and deliberately sets out to narrate a Scottish identity that could be considered patriotic if not nationalistic. The *Scotichronicon* is a text with strong expressions of national sentiment, at the end of which Bower adds the colophon *Non Scotus est Christe cui liber non placet iste*: 'By Christ, he is not a Scot who is not pleased with this book'.²⁷ W.W. Scott observes that to this national narrative, Bower added 'passages of reflection composed in the scholastic manner', which were 'often illustrated and made more persuasive by literary allusions'.²⁸ The inclusion of particular miracles associated with Margaret bolster this reading of *Scotichronicon*, since they draw heavily on both hagiography and dream visions as literary forms.

The date of Bower's compilation of *Scotichronicon* and of the recopying of the *Miracula* might also be significant. The mid-fifteenth century saw the bicentennial of Margaret's canonisation. While we cannot be sure that any form of commemoration or celebration took place, it is plausible that the significance of the date was not lost on Bower or the copyist at Dunfermline who produced the extant *Miracula*.²⁹ That these two texts both emerge during the

mid- to late fifteenth century indicates that the ecclesiastical elite saw value in writing about Margaret's sanctity in relation both to her healing miracles and to her function as a patriotic symbol.

While Bower includes snippets of Margaret's life at certain points of his chronicle, two major additions to Fordun's text occur in the form of extended narratives in Book 10 of *Scotichronicon*. These relate to the translation of her remains at Dunfermline Abbey following her canonisation, and the miraculous dream vision that accompanies the Scottish victory at the Battle of Largs. While they are still comparatively short accounts of sections of Margaret's saintly existence, they occur in a part of the *Scotichronicon* that seems particularly concerned with Scottish heritage, monarchical descent and the assertion of sovereignty in the lead-up to the Wars of Independence that began in the late thirteenth century. It is in these two miraculous happenings that Bower's interest in Margaret's sanctity as political and cultural sign, and how that could be communicated meaningfully in fifteenth-century historiography, becomes clear.

In June 1250, Alexander III (1249–86) had the 'earthly remains' (*reliquias*) of his great-great-great-grandmother, the 'glorious Queen Margaret' (*gloriose regine Margarete*), raised.³⁰ Fordun had noted briefly in annal 49 that the king, along with his mother and the feudal *communitas regni*, 'took up, in great state, the bones of the blessed Margaret' and laid her remains 'with the deepest devoutness, in a shrine of deal, set with gold and precious stones'.³¹ Bower expands on this account to provide his readers with a narrative that more fully explores Margaret's sanctity, using hagiographical literature as his model.³²

Employing typical hagiographical motifs, Bower recounts how the opened grave poured forth such 'an intense and sweet smelling fragrance' that 'men thought that the entire sanctuary had been sprinkled with the fragrances of spices and the scents of flowers in full bloom'.³³ Margaret's casket was carried without difficulty as far as the chancel door where the body of her husband, Malcolm, lay 'under the arched roof on the north side of the nave'.³⁴ It is at this point that the arms of the casket bearers become paralysed and 'because of the great weight they were no longer able to move the shrine which held the remains'.³⁵ As the carriers wonder why they are no longer able to lift Margaret's casket, a 'voice coming from one of the bystanders' – but believed to be 'divinely inspired' (*inspirata*) – proclaims that it is 'not God's will that the bones of the holy queen be translated before her husband's tomb

has been opened, and his body raised and honoured in the same way'.³⁶ Bower then recounts how Malcolm's tomb is opened, with Alexander and his companions carrying the two caskets alongside each other, 'without expending any effort or encountering any obstacle', to the tombs which had been decked out elegantly for that purpose'.³⁷ Not only does Bower's narrative of the translation of Margaret's relics emphasise the odour of sanctity, with Margaret's tomb emitting the scents of flowers and spices but, in death, Margaret also continues to be a model of the perfect queen.³⁸ In refusing to allow her remains to take precedence over those of her husband, even though he had not been canonised, Margaret's sanctity is once again apparent. In death, as in life, Margaret plays the role of the good wife. The image of the 'good wife' is an unusual motif in hagiography, where the emphasis tends to be on the virginity or chastity of the text's subject. Indeed in the *Book of Margery Kempe*, Margery's husband John responds to her decision to eschew physical intimacy with him, and to mimic the virgin martyrs in many respects, with the remark that Margery is 'no good wyfe'.³⁹ Margaret is distinctly not a virgin martyr (nor a woman who chose to devote herself solely to God in all respects) and, as such, writers must construct her in a different manner. Unlike the virgin martyrs, Margaret does not defy authority and she is seen to uphold the model of perfection that Turgot had created in the twelfth century. What is important for Bower here, and it draws out some of the concerns of Turgot's *vita*, is the image of the family (and Margaret's family in particular) as being divinely ordained.

In both Fordun and Bower's accounts, the translation of Margaret's remains immediately follows the inauguration of the eight-year old Alexander III in 1249 and comes just before the marriage of Alexander III to Margaret, daughter of the English king Henry III (1207–72). Sandwiched between these two visions, one of monarchical heritage and the other a promise of royal procreation, the image of St Margaret becomes part of the fabric of Scottish royal culture and expectation, at once an image of Scotland's illustrious past and a conduit for its future. The placing of these two English Margarets in such proximity within the narrative indicates the ways in which Bower sees history as repetitive and prophetic in the sense that historical events might foretell those of the future. The focus of the narrative of saintly translation might be one of sanctity, but it is also one of profitable and productive royal marriage. The hope appears to be that the marriage of

Alexander and Margaret would mirror and carry forward that of Malcolm and St Margaret, although Bower knew this to be a false hope. In 1289, Alexander III died, leaving the three-year-old Maid of Norway (another Margaret) as the heir to the Scottish throne. It was her death on the journey to Scotland that led ultimately to the Wars of Independence. With hindsight, perhaps, Bower uses his narrative to look back to the origins of the Scottish people, with St Margaret as the pivotal point where legendary history and genealogy met the present and future of the Scottish monarchy. In doing so, he could not change the history he presented, but perhaps tried to direct its future.

During the inauguration, Alexander's genealogy is narrated by a 'venerable, grey-haired' elderly Scot, a 'wild highlander' who, nevertheless, addresses the king in a 'scrupulously correct manner' in 'his mother tongue [Gaelic]'.⁴⁰ It is a genealogy linking 'each person with the next' until the highlander 'came to the first Scot, that is Hiber Scot', son of Gaythelos and Scota, the legendary founders of the Scots. In doing so, Bower commemorates St Margaret by situating her within Scottish monarchical genealogy that legitimates Scottish sovereignty. In the depiction of the translation of Margaret and Malcolm's relics, Bower has shown himself concerned not only with sanctity and literary composition, but also with how sanctity as literature might serve a narrative purpose in the wider historical and cultural memory of Scotland. Whether Margaret is made to fit the image of Scota, or whether Scota is made to fit the image of Margaret, Bower's text consciously brings these two foreign females to the forefront of the Scottish historical imagination. The image of Margaret in the *Scotichronicon* is thus one of a national figure: first and foremost she is perceived to be a Scottish queen. At the same time, Bower also seeks to narrate her as a saintly figure. In the second extended narrative of St Margaret, he focuses on her role as intercessor and performer of miracles. Chapter 16 of *Scotichronicon's* Book 10 demonstrates that Bower's concerns were not only of Scottish sovereignty but also of the intersection of national ideals that are ciphered through St Margaret of Scotland's royal and saintly identities. To do this, Bower uses the dream vision narrative of a pilgrimage that ends with the healing of an individual and the news of a crucial military victory for the Scots.

The *Scotichronicon* is a text that abounds with dreams and visions; there are approximately eighty dream- and vision-related episodes throughout the chronicle. It is a literary form that seems to have been extremely popular in fifteenth century Scotland, and

Kylie Murray has argued that the textual evidence reveals that in the final quarter of the century at least some of Scotland's leading political and ecclesiastical figures were 'reading literary works which inflected episodes of dreams and visionary states towards a political agenda'.⁴¹ Of course, one of the major Scottish poems of the fifteenth century, the *Kingis Quair* (c. 1424) was a dream vision narrative, and one that Bower himself might have encountered, having been personally known at the court of its author James I.⁴² Throughout Bower's narrative, therefore, there occurs an intersection between the hagiographic and the historio-political in the use of the dream vision structure, which culminates in one of the most important episodes relating to the figuring of Margaret as a military and Scottish saint.

Bower's account of the miracle at Largs in 1263 is almost identical to that contained in the *Miracula*, and it is not implausible that Bower had access to an earlier exemplar of the collection at Dunfermline. He certainly used other Dunfermline sources in the composing of *Scotichronicon*. It is noteworthy that if Bower did have access to the same exemplar of the *Miracula* as the writer who copied it into the Madrid MS text, he chose not to include the stories of those miracles that occurred on a more local and domestic scale. Bower has carefully selected the story that relates Margaret's sanctity to both visionary appearances and to miracles concerning the military defence of Scotland, fitting two of the main preoccupations of his chronicle. It is an episode that is indicative of the literary patriotism that seems to inform much of the chronicle's narrative.

In Chapter 16, Bower recalls that in August 1263, King Haakon IV of Norway (1217–63) came to 'the new castle of Ayr' with twenty thousand men in one hundred and sixty 'pirate ships'.⁴³ Haakon's military campaign is motivated by the assertion of what he believes to be his hereditary right to the 'islands of Scotland' which lay between the mainland and Ireland.⁴⁴ Importantly for Bower, Haakon plunders the Scottish coast (the churches in particular) without 'fear of divine wrath' (*absque metu divino crudeliter depredavit*),⁴⁵ and it is a consequence of this that Haakon's military successes are short-lived. Divine wrath, however, does not come directly from God but through the figure of St Margaret, and the brief paragraph detailing Haakon's military expeditions sets the scene for the main concern of Chapter 16: the vision of Margaret to John Wemyss, knight and lord of Methil and Wemyss in East Fife.

From the factual account of Haakon's arrival at Largs, Bower moves to a more narrative exploration of the story of Wemyss who, 'completely worn out by the severity of fevers, which recurred daily ... gladly abandoned his weary limbs to sleep'.⁴⁶ This shift in style is signified by the beginning of the story with *Interea* – 'meanwhile' – and it is here that Bower shifts to a more literary style for the vision of Margaret. Wemyss is transported in his dream (or vision) to the church at Dunfermline, where he sees a lady 'of radiant beauty and resplendent in full royal attire' moving quickly out of the north church door. She is not alone, however, and is 'leading on her right arm' a 'distinguished looking knight', clad in armour and wearing a crowned helmet. Furthermore, three more knights follow this royal pair. Struck by the vision before him, Wemyss takes 'comfort from the beauty and benevolence of the lady who headed the group', addressing her: "Glorious lady, please tell me who you are and where you ... are going". The lady replies:

I am Margaret, formerly queen of Scots. The knight who has my arm is the lord king Malcolm my husband, and these knights who are following us are our sons, the most renowned kings of this realm while they lived. In company with them I am hurrying to defend our country at Largs, and to win victory over the usurper who is unjustly trying to make *my* kingdom subject to *his* rule. For you must know that I received this kingdom from God, granted in trust to me and to our heirs forever.⁴⁷

With this, Margaret disappears and Wemyss wakes from his dream, seemingly more afflicted than before with 'chronic illness'. Yet, he determines to travel to Dunfermline where he recounts the dream to the monastery's prior. The prior interprets the dream as having divine significance, and the reader is told that it is 'not the sort of dream by which we are often deluded, but one revealed by heaven, as the outcome showed'. Having recounted his dream, Wemyss proceeds to St Margaret's shrine, determined 'with tearful devotion' to 'kiss the whole area'. Before he reaches the shrine, however, he 'suddenly felt well and in good spirits'. Furthermore, a servant comes in bringing the news of 'the victory just won at Largs'.⁴⁸

Bower intends Wemyss's vision, his healing and the victory at Largs to be read as confirmation of Margaret's sanctity, and does this through an intersection of the miraculous dream vision associated with saints' lives and the literary dream vision narratives of poetic composition. As a saint, Margaret possesses the ability to heal the sick and Wemyss himself benefits from her benevolence; at

the same time, the confirmation of Margaret's sanctity for those not experiencing the dream (i.e., everyone who is not Wemyss, or the prior at Dunfermline), requires its manifestation within the text. For Bower, perhaps as for all of the texts concerning Margaret, sanctity depends on literature for its perpetuation. Without textual proof, sanctity loses its efficacy to those who are not in receipt of its working. While Bower is careful to acknowledge the suspicion of dreams and visions in the Middle Ages (he is careful, just as the *Miracula* is, to insist that the prior knows the dream to be a revelation of the Divine), he distinctly draws on the dream vision as a literary device, particularly common in later medieval Scotland, with writers such as James I and Robert Henryson using the technique. It is the creative potential that the dream vision offers Bower that becomes apparent in his description of Margaret to John Wemyss.

While the Dunfermline *Miracula* is also focused on the healing aspect of Margaret's sanctity, it is less concerned with the military imagery that Bower privileges. Bower introduces into the narrative a more militaristic vocabulary that suits his emphasis on Margaret's role in the battle and the figure of Wemyss. Where Wemyss is *iustus et fidelis* ('righteous and pious') in the *Miracula*, he is *strenuous* ('vigorous, courageous') in Bower's version, and while Margaret is *omni decoratum* ('splendidly dressed') in the *Miracula*, Bower easily identifies her by her full royal attire. Moreover, Bower also foregrounds the military attire of Malcolm and the sons. The result is a consolidated image of the importance of the military campaign that Margaret then describes. At the same time, Wemyss's individual healing takes second place in the *Scotichronicon* to the grander narrative of Margaret's intervention at the Battle of Largs, which suggests another, more politically motivated, exploration of her sanctity in the historiography of the fifteenth century. Bower's choice to depict this particular miracle of Margaret seeks to create an identity for her in the fifteenth century that is distinctly national, at odds with the contemporaneous copying of the *Miracula* which utilises both the local and the national in the confirmation of Margaret's sanctity.

It is in the dream that the reader 'hears' Margaret speak, and the reply she gives to Wemyss is deliberately designed to be read patriotically. Margaret refers to the defence of *our* country and *my* kingdom, specifically referring to herself as 'queen of Scots' (*Scotorum regina*) adopting the traditional Scottish monarchical epithet of ruling a people rather than styling herself 'queen of Scotland'. In the following chapter, however, Bower refers to

Margaret as *regni Scocie protectricis* – protectress of the *realm of Scotland*⁴⁹ – which seems to tie her to the land (the geographical terrain, or the sovereign territory) of Scotland rather than the styled ‘king of Scots’ favoured by the monarch. Through Bower, Margaret is reinvented as *protectrix*: saint and queen. She inspires her husband and sons and enacts the ‘will of God’⁵⁰ both in her lifetime and after her death. Bower suggests roles for the saint in death that mirror and extend the ones she occupied in life: a protector of her people and kingdom, whose sanctity was expressed through subsequent miraculous activities, and the force of change that inspired Malcolm III and directed the nature of their sons’ kingships. In her roles as saint and queen, Margaret is being styled as a national figure, instrumental to the victory achieved by the Scots at Largs. Bower’s main concern here might be to narrate how Scotland needs to be defended from those who would seek to conquer it – the passage fits neatly into the *Scotichronicon*’s assertion of Scottish independence – but in doing so, and by choosing to include this miracle of St Margaret where Fordun does not, Bower links sanctity, politics, and literature within the dream vision. His effort may not be to demonstrate the sanctity of St Margaret per se, as the *Miracula* does, but to demonstrate how that sanctity can be rendered as political and literary.

There is no suggestion in *Scotichronicon* that Margaret herself takes up arms to fight Haakon’s forces, and Bower uses her saintly image to reinvent Margaret as a defender of her kingdom. If we look more closely at the description of her moving out of the church, Bower is careful to comment that Malcolm III is led by Margaret with her right hand. While she might be leading him, it is clear that he is in the position of honour, and that the military prowess lies with him and the sons who follow behind. It is they who are ‘all gleaming in similar armour’.⁵¹ Margaret’s role, then, appears to be that of inspirational figure, a conduit for Divine power to inspire the military Scots to the defence of their kingdom. Interestingly, while Bower has Margaret refer to ‘my kingdom’ (*regnum meum*) in the Corpus Christi manuscript, in the later Coupar Angus version,⁵² this has changed to ‘our kingdom’ (*regnum nostrum*), a small change that significantly alters the way in which the reader responds to Margaret’s position.⁵³ The Margaret of the Coupar Angus narrative generates a feeling of inclusivity that demands a reciprocal feeling of patriotism from the reader. For the *regnum nostrum* is not only Margaret and Malcolm’s, but also the *patria* of *Scotichronicon*’s intended audience.

Within the concerns of his history – a tour de force of Scottish national imaginings – Bower uses Margaret’s sanctity as both a literary and political tool. Much of the material situates Margaret as a traditional saintly figure and, chosen as a favourite of God, the Margaret of the *Scotichronicon* verges on becoming a national saint, not unlike the figure of St Andrew, who was also described as a quiet, pious man.⁵⁴ Michelle Smith argues that for Andrew, as for the legendary Scota, ‘morality rather than military prowess was favoured’; he protected his Scottish family by inspiring military victories and politically unified the Scots.⁵⁵ In the *Scotichronicon* St Margaret is brought into this moral fold and she is (re)created as a pious woman who looked after her Scottish family (domestic and national), intervened in military campaigns, and became an image of Scotland. The parallel between Margaret and Andrew also occurs in Andrew of Wyntoun’s vernacular verse *Orygynale Cronykil* (c. 1407–20) when before the Battle of Roslin in 1303, a zealous preacher urges his ‘[l]ordis, falowis, and masteris’:

With stowt hart ilkane of yow
 Settis agayne this ane assay;
 Gif God wil, ouris sal be this day.
 In God al youre helpe is set,
 Sancte Andrew, Sancte Nynyane, and Sancte Mergret.⁵⁶

Here Wyntoun suggests that Margaret, alongside Andrew, has become a saint to which soldiers pray for victory. Similarly, the implication in *Scotichronicon* is that if Margaret had not intervened at Largs, Scotland may have lost territory to the Norwegian ‘tyrant’, just as they might have succumbed to English rule had St Andrew not ensured their later victories at Dunbar (1296) and Stirling Bridge (1297). The parallels that Bower draws between Margaret and national sanctity indicate that he was concerned to portray Margaret as a national saint, whose concern was for the independence of a Scottish kingdom against foreign imperial desires. This, combined with Bower’s interest in dream and vision as narrative techniques, dictates which of Margaret’s miracles he includes. Within the confines of the *Scotichronicon*, Margaret’s sanctity becomes of national literary interest and importance.

We must be careful of not falling into the trap of the McRoberts thesis, however, and assuming that there arose in the fifteenth century a new and nationalist trend in religious observation in Scotland.⁵⁷ While Bower’s reinterpretation of Margaret’s sanctity

does situate her as an almost patron saint, and one whose saintly influence worked specifically to bolster Scottish assertions of sovereignty as well as providing a communal focus for the identity politics associated with this, it is not to say that this was the only way in which Scottish saints were imagined, nor that Scottish saints were the only objects of veneration. The hagiographical landscape is more complicated than McRoberts's argument allows for, as David Ditchburn indicates in discussion of the patterns of sanctity in late medieval Scotland.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the recopying of the *Miracula*, while it focuses on Margaret as a saintly figure, does so in a way that really cannot be interpreted as 'national'. She is written as a healing saint, with a mainly local following; the geographical range is strongly connected with Dunfermline with a few miracles involving supplicants from about one hundred miles away from the religious centre. What is clear is that Bower is conscious of working Margaret's sanctity into the history that he is trying to create – what is of interest to him are the aspects of her sanctity that work for his history and how (symbiotically) his history can modify responses to Margaret's sanctity. While Bower's text might seem to bolster the McRoberts thesis, what seems to be an emergence of devotional nationalism in the fifteenth century might be misleading given the particularity of the expression of Margaret's sanctity within Bower's text. Margaret might be imagined as a saint interested in national ideals and sovereignty in the vision of Largs, but more importantly she also represents a vision of leadership and stable Scottish monarchy at a time when the lack of this was a cause of anxiety. Margaret is familiarly Scottish at the same time that the narratives of her life and sanctity are familiarly saintly.

The cult of saints is not static, but is subject to constant change and reinterpretation. The interest in, and literary expression of, sanctity is also dependent on the variables of how sanctity is to be understood in different periods and within different genres. What is clear in examining the portrayal of St Margaret in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fifteenth centuries is that sanctity, as it was imagined as a literary concern, is reimagined and recomposed. The shift in emphasis from Margaret's devoutness in Turgot's *vita* to her role as protectress of Scotland in Bower's *Scotichronicon* indicates how, and what, shifts in perceptions of her sanctity might have taken place between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. I have only considered the example of St Margaret, and therefore it would be unwise to make wider assumptions about literary expressions of

sanctity in fifteenth-century Scotland. The question of what literary forms sanctity took in late medieval Scotland, indeed saints' cults as a whole, is just beginning to emerge. It is certainly a topic in much need of attention. What I hope to have shown is that for Scottish writers, Margaret's sanctity was not a static entity and served a variety of purposes, particularly in the fifteenth century. The main surviving texts with their different emphases suggest what uses sanctity could be put to in literary composition in the fifteenth century: the *Miracula* narrating miracles as proof of Margaret's sanctity, Bower's *Scotichronicon* utilising that sanctity as a literary model of national sovereignty. What is missing in the fifteenth-century literary renderings of St Margaret is a *vita*. Whether one existed will probably never been known; it certainly does not survive. From the extant narratives it is clear that what survives of St Margaret is what writers chose to use her sanctity for. In Bower's *Scotichronicon* and, to an extent, in Wyntoun there is a move away from creating a complete hagiography to constructing Margaret's sanctity in political, and not merely hagiographical, terms. Throughout *Scotichronicon*, Bower draws upon a number of genres in order to depict Margaret's saintly exemplarity. In his use of the dream vision, the hagiographical narrative, and the chronicle, Bower demonstrates a concern with literary practice and its role in constructing the image of the saint. While Bower saw political uses for the only medieval Scottish royal saint in his account of Scottish history, the real politics of Scottish sainthood perhaps lie in the choice of genre and story that were chosen to represent Margaret's sanctity at any given moment.

Notes

- 1 Karen A. Winstead, 'Sainly Exemplarity', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 335–51.
- 2 G.W.S. Barrow, 'Margaret [St Margaret] (d. 1093)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18044 (accessed 17 July 2012). For a more detailed discussion of the life of St Margaret, see Alan J. Wilson, *St Margaret, Queen of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1993).
- 3 Lois Huneycutt provides an analysis of the relationship between the long and short versions of the *Life of St Margaret* in 'The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The *Life of St Margaret* in the Reign of Matilda II (1100–1118)', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1989), pp. 81–97.

- 4 As Huneycutt suggests, the question of authorship is problematic. She argues that the attribution of the *Life* to Turgot has been adopted only for lack of a better candidate. In this chapter, I follow the accepted scholarship and regard Turgot as the author of the long version of the *Life of St Margaret*.
- 5 William Forbes-Leith (trans.), *The Life of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland, by Turgot, Bishop of St Andrews* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1884), p. 19 (hereafter referred to as *Turgot vita*).
- 6 *Turgot vita*, p. 20.
- 7 Dominic David Alexander, 'Hermits, Hagiography, and Popular Culture: A Comparative Study of Durham Cathedral Priory's Hermits in the Twelfth Century', (PhD dissertation, Queen Mary, University of London, 2000), p. 18; *Turgot vita*, p. 72.
- 8 Alexander, 'Hermits, Hagiography, and Popular Culture', p. 18.
- 9 *Turgot vita*, p. 21.
- 10 *Turgot vita*, p. 23.
- 11 *Turgot vita*, p. 41.
- 12 *Turgot vita*, p. 24.
- 13 *Turgot vita*, p. 40.
- 14 *Turgot vita*, pp. 24, 32.
- 15 'Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer every man' (Colossians 4:6).
- 16 *Turgot vita*, p. 69.
- 17 *Turgot vita*, p. 67.
- 18 *Turgot vita*, p. 67.
- 19 *Turgot vita*, p. 67.
- 20 *Turgot vita*, p. 68.
- 21 The *Miracula* has been edited and translated for the first time by Robert Bartlett, *The Miracles of St Æbbe of Coldingham and St Margaret of Scotland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).
- 22 Bartlett, *Miracles*, p. xxxii.
- 23 Bartlett, *Miracles*, p. xxxi.
- 24 Bartlett, *Miracles*, p. xxxi.
- 25 Bartlett, *Miracles*, p. xxxvii.
- 26 'Introduction', in Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, in D.E.R. Watt (gen. ed.), 9 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987–1998), Vol. 9, pp. xi–xv (hereafter referred to as *Chron. Bower*).
- 27 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 8, p. 341.
- 28 W.W. Scott, 'The Sources', in *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 9, pp. 234–59, at p. 243.
- 29 I am grateful to Alex Woolf for this suggestion, and to those who attended the Scottish Historical Narratives workshop at the University of St Andrews (September 2011), for the discussions of an earlier version of this article.
- 30 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297.

- 31 John of Fordun, *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. W.F. Skene, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871–72), facsimile reprint (Lampeter: Llanerch Press, 1993), Vol. 2, pp. 290–1 (hereafter referred to as *Chron. Fordun*).
- 32 Watt presumes that Bower's version is drawn from a Dunfermline source, now lost (*Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 442).
- 33 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297.
- 34 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297.
- 35 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297: *preponderis gravitudine ulterius non poterant feretrum cum reliquiis amovere*.
- 36 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297.
- 37 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 299.
- 38 Cf. Suzanne Evans, 'The Scent of a Martyr', *Numen* 49.2 (2002), pp. 193–211.
- 39 B.A. Windeatt (trans.), *The Book of Margery Kempe* (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 58.
- 40 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 295.
- 41 Kylie Murray, 'Dream and Vision in Late-Medieval Scotland: The Epic Case of William Wallace', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 29 (2009), pp. 177–98. For a full discussion of this, see Kylie Murray, 'Dream and Vision in Scotland, c. 1375–c. 1500' (PhD dissertation, University of Oxford 2013).
- 42 See Katie Stevenson, "'Recreations to refresh the spirits of his followers": Walter Bower's Revelations on Cultural Pursuits at James I of Scotland's Court', *Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines* 40 (2007), pp. 9–23.
- 43 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 336: *piraticis suis navibus*. The dates differ from those of the other sources, such as *Melrose*, which give the date of the battle of Largs as 2 October. See A.O. Anderson (ed.), *Early Sources of Scottish History, 500 to 1286*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1922; repr. Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1990), Vol. 2, p. 628.
- 44 For a brief discussion of the dispute between Haakon and Alexander III, see Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 3–4. See also Knut Helle, 'The Norwegian Kingdom: Succession Disputes and Consolidation', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, Vol. 1: *Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 369–91.
- 45 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 336.
- 46 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 337: *sompno grato exhibit*.
- 47 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 297; my emphasis.
- 48 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 339.
- 49 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 339.
- 50 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 339.

- 51 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 5, p. 337.
- 52 Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 35.1.7.
- 53 The Coupar Angus manuscript is an abridged version of *Scotichronicon*, most likely prepared under Bower's direction between 1450 and 1480. *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 9, p. 243.
- 54 *Chron. Bower*, Vol. 1, p. 311; F.J. Amours (ed.), *Andrew of Wyntoun, The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, 6 vols, STS 50, 53–4, 56–7, 63 (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903–14), Vol. 3, pp. 234–5. See also Michael Brown, *Wars of Scotland 1214–137* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p. 134.
- 55 Michelle A. Smith, 'Assessing Gender in the Construction of Scottish Identity, c. 1286–c. 1586' (PhD dissertation, University of Auckland, 2010), p. 113. Smith provides an interesting discussion of the gender politics of the competing Scota and St Andrew myths in Scotland; see pp. 80–129.
- 56 *Chron. Wyntoun*, v, p. 339.
- 57 David McRoberts, 'The Scottish Church and Nationalism in the Fifteenth Century', *Innes Review* 19 (1968), pp. 3–14.
- 58 David Ditchburn, 'The "McRoberts Thesis" and Patterns of Sanctity in Late Medieval Scotland', in Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson (eds), *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 177–94.

2

Good knights and holy men: reading the virtue of soldier-saints in medieval literary genres

Andrew Lynch

Hagiography and romance have long been understood to have some important elements in common, such as narrative patterns of edification and exemplarity, an overlapping repertoire of incidents and motifs, and a penchant for valuing strenuous affectivity, especially bodily suffering. It is not surprising that these literary genres quite frequently occur in the same manuscript miscellanies, or that their heroes can sometimes switch genres.¹ Nor is it surprising that actual knights claimed for themselves a form of religious virtue on the grounds of their bodily trials.² Yet secular knighthood and Christian sanctity are by no means a perfect match. Although soldier saints were popular in the early Church,³ it has been argued by Diarmaid MacCulloch that ‘the legacy of Christianity to state violence was contradictory’, with Pauline ‘imperial loyalty’ contending against Christ’s command to Peter to put away his sword.⁴ MacCulloch suggests that that early Christians had a ‘negative attitude to military service’ because of its disciplinary and ritual demands, and that a number of early Christian stories of soldiers martyred for refusing sacrifice were ‘probably fabricated in an effort to encourage waverers to keep to a principled line’.⁵ In the later literary development of both saints’ lives and of romances, a similar tension between ideas of Christian holiness and of ordinary military ‘goodness’ is often evident. Although numerous saints, like George, Sebastian, Maurice, and Edmund, are treated as ‘good knights’ in medieval *vitae*, they are still shown achieving sanctity through a conversion of secular military service into the higher form of martyrdom. In what follows here, I trace a continuing competition between hagiography and secular literature for the meaning of knightly virtue, in a range of English texts from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. I argue that this literature, especially the lives of knight-martyrs, provides a sterner view of secular knighthood than the often acknowledged

similarities between hagiography and romance might otherwise suggest.

I begin with an image.



2.1 The Resurrection, sixteenth-century alabaster relief sculpture. The Dickinson White Collection of Architectural Photographs, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

In medieval English alabaster relief panels of the Resurrection, Christ, clad only in his winding sheet, steps past and over the

heavily armed bodies of soldiers around his broken tomb. In a panel now at Cornell,⁶ one soldier ineffectually clutches a sword, one is turned away in sleep, one looks up in surprise, and a drowsy fourth is Christ's stepping-stone. Whether Christ is stepping gently on a sleeping man or dominating a vanquished enemy is a matter of interpretation. The pattern is repeated with variations in numerous other examples.⁷ A late fourteenth-century version in the Victoria and Albert Museum suggests that the soldiers are quite irrelevant to a risen Lord exhibiting a power incomparably greater than Caesar's. Christ looks out intently beyond the frame as universal judge. His right hand is raised in admonition; the left upholds the cross (now missing), like the standard of a legion.⁸ Beholders can only draw one conclusion about kingdoms of this world and the next.

These Resurrection images are striking for their effortless and ironic rebuke of the military. Their content is elaborated more directly in the mystery play cycles, such as in the *N-Town* 'Guarding of the Sepulchre' and 'Pilate and the Soldiers'.⁹ Its four tomb guards have been terrified and cast down by an irresistible power; they resent Pilate's accusation that they have been 'fals' and lost 'worchepe' by failing to prevent the escape, since no one could have succeeded:

Tercius Miles:

'3a, it was hy3 tyme to leyn oure bost,
For whan þe body toke aȝen þe gost,
He wold a frayd many an ost,
Kyng, knyȝt and knave.'¹⁰

But then, for a promise of money from Pilate they agree to hush up the matter. The corresponding *York* and *Towneley Play* soldiers refer to themselves as 'knyghtis', and Pilate calls them so.¹¹ They too tell Pilate honestly of the Resurrection, but are bribed with money and promises of maintenance to lie about it. In the *Chester Play*, the four 'knights everichon'¹² follow the same pattern of boasting, terror, confession and concealment. The direction for Christ's treading on the fallen knights is explicitly triumphant here – 'Jesus resurgens et pede eos milites quatit'¹³ – and one complains: 'He set his foote upon my backe / that every lythe beganne to cracke'.¹⁴ The knights have a chance to become witnesses to the Lord, like the shepherds earlier in the cycle, or the Centurion and the blind knight Longinus present at the Crucifixion,¹⁵ and for a while they look as if they will take it, but they eventually reject

the opportunity. Their false belief in their own power to control Christ and the news of his rising is matched by their over-valuation of short-term earthly reward. The *N-Town* knights quickly fall in with Annas's cynical view – 'For mede doth most in every qwest, / And mede is mastyr bothe est and west'¹⁶ – and Pilate packs them off to Rome, on horseback, with false tidings. Their promise to tell no 'talys' about the event¹⁷ is of course rendered absurd in a dramatic context where the central tenet of Christianity is displayed in a mass public setting.

In the *Towneley Play*, the audience sees Herod's 'knights', as they are called,¹⁸ eagerly slaughter children for 'castels and corne, / Mych gold in our mayls [saddle-bags]'.¹⁹ It is interesting to think that a large cross-section of the populace of England, who saw these plays yearly repeated, were encouraged to consider not only the weakness of military power in the face of Christ's authority, but also the propensity of 'knights' to commit outrages and condone wrong for the sake of money and maintenance by secular rulers. The mystery plays offer two kinds of 'knights', the few who respond conscientiously to events and act on their perceptions of the truth, and the many who simply follow orders for reward and take whatever advantage is on offer.

The 'knights' I have been discussing, figures built up imaginatively from scriptural accounts, seem in strong contrast to the protagonists of medieval romance. They have armour and weapons, but not much mention is made of horses or squires, let alone ladies whom they serve. Without any personal commitment to *aventure* or a chivalric *voie*, their job is simply to obey. Little troubled by questions of honour, they act principally for financial reward. It might be argued that they are 'knights' in the sense of a 'soldier of Biblical or ancient times',²⁰ rather than of a 'noble warrior; a member of the land-holding ruling class, owing military service to his lord and fighting on horseback'.²¹ Yet the texts in which they figure do not emphasise that distinction, and since the audience often sees them directly commanded by the king and governor they can hardly be understood as common soldiers. Overall, the genre does not care very much about exact definition of the military. Mystery play representations of 'knights' uphold an interest in the moral responsibilities of high-ranking soldiers in secular service, but they rarely show such figures in a good light, because the secular powers in this Passion context, as in all martyrdoms, are against God, and only those rare 'knights' who go against them can be for him. There is no interest here in preserving the status of

knighthood per se: it only seems honourable when its representatives pass judgement by other, Christian standards.

In medieval saints' lives, 'good knights' figure as both instruments of secular power and moral agents who must often resist it as Christians. In the life of St Maurice, St Sulpicius of the Theban Legion concisely expresses the distinction:

We be thi knyghtes, Sire emperour, but we confesse us to be the verrai seruantes of Ihesus Crist. We owe to the knyghthode and to hym innocence, and of the we loke to haue mede for oure laboure and of him we haue bygynninge of ouyre lyf.²²

St Theodore, commanded to worship the idols and to 'turne ayeyn to his first knyghthode', defends his actions specifically as a knight: 'I ride to Ihesu Crist, þe son of God and my God'.²³ In the *South English Legendary's* narrative of Sebastian, the issue is further articulated. Sebastian, the emperor Diocletian's 'hext maister',²⁴ stresses that his opposition to the persecution of Christians is actually part of his knightly loyalty. When Diocletian accuses him of having "Iturnd ... þi þouȝt" "a-ȝen me and a-ȝen myn honour",²⁵ Sebastian replies: "Aȝen þe neuere I nas, / Ake mid þe and alle þine þinge to þin honour ich was"; that is why he has continually prayed God to give the emperor strength to forsake his false gods.²⁶ Sebastian is later miraculously resurrected from his death by arrow-shot, and after three days appears again to Diocletian to make him the same prayer to leave his 'Maumates'.²⁷ The narrative point is to demonstrate the inequality of earthly and heavenly power: "Ovȝ", seide þe Aumperovr þo "ȝware is oure miȝte? / Schel þis þeof þoruȝ his wichchinge a-ȝen us with wordes fiȝte?"²⁸ Diocletian then has the saint killed secretly, in an attempt to vilify the body and hide the miracle, but Sebastian reveals his location to a holy woman and so receives Christian burial. His higher Christian conception of knightly 'honour' and loyalty is made to triumph over the emperor's absolutist demand for blind obedience. Throughout his martyrdom, as in St George's, the frequent conversion of pagan onlookers, including royalty, nobles, and knights, shows that the grace to acknowledge Christ is available to all if their hearts are not quite hardened. As in the mystery plays of the Resurrection, the very existence of the narrative celebrating the saint's day shows the futility of human opposition to divine truth.

The huge variety and longevity of saints' lives makes generalisations about them risky,²⁹ but it is fair to say that in popular hagiography it was made clear to medieval audiences that to be a

‘good knight’ in the sense of one who merited salvation involved more than a narrowly contractual sense of military utility. Readers and listeners are repeatedly led to contrast knights who resist evil authority or who are converted by the example of martyrs with those like Herod’s men in the mystery plays who practice cruel outrages or deny the truth while obeying orders. The relation between earthly and heavenly service is much in mind in saints’ lives, partly because soldier-martyrs have to clear themselves of the charge of treason to the emperor, who regards himself as both their temporal and their spiritual lord. The story of Maurice and the Theban Legion provides perhaps the fullest exploration of this issue, especially because in the *Legenda Aurea* form it has definite chivalric touches: the Theban martyrs are said to be ‘semely men of bodies, noble in armis, stronge in bataile’.³⁰ Faced with a demand to fight for the empire against rebels they ‘yelden to God that longed to God, and to Cesar that longed to Cesar’ ‘for to helpe him [the emperor] in his righwyse batailes, and not for to bere armes ayenst the cristen but for to defende them rather’. Maurice insists that they have taken arms only ‘to the defens of the comun’ and are without ‘treson ne drede’, but a decimation of the legion is ordered when they refuse to sacrifice to the idols and kill Christians. Sulpicius then takes up his banner and exhorts the remaining knights:

Oure glorious duke Moris hath spoke of the glorie of oure felawship of knightz, wherfor y lete you wete that y Sulpicius your banerere toke none armes for to withstonde to [fight against] such thynges [i.e., death for the faith], wherfor late us with oure right hondes throw away the flesshely armes and arme us with vertues.³¹

Sulpicius’ chivalric language – ‘duke Moris’, ‘glorie’, ‘felawship’, ‘toke ... armes’, ‘right hondes’ – is controversially applied to a refusal to resist death by fighting. Being knightly in this case means throwing away their weapons (ordinarily a coward’s act) with the same ‘right hands’ that are traditionally invoked in exhortations to use weapons in battle.³² Sulpicius means that as a Christian knight he did not enter the emperor’s service in order to avoid dying for Christ, the highest lord. *That* would be the real treachery; in this genre the true work of right hands is made consciously different. So the legionaries resolve, like Anglo-Saxon thanes or *chanson de geste* heroes, to die with those already killed: “‘We haue suffered oure felawes to be slaine and oure clothes be rede of her blode’”.³³ But unlike Byrhtnoth’s men or Roland, they do not first attempt

to win the day for Christianity by force. The point of this translation of chivalry into the language of martyrdom is that their real Christian knighthood will be expressed in dying, not in making earthly war.

Despite these saints' resistance to the emperor, their *vitae* give no licence to rebellion in earthly terms, and do not show Christian soldiers trying to force a division between their secular employment and their religion. Figures like Sebastian and Eustace, who have both held high office under the empire, do not disclose their faith until circumstances force them, and it appears that they would otherwise have continued as imperial agents. On his first conversion, Eustace decides to leave Trajan's service but he afterwards returns to it very successfully.³⁴ Sebastian stays on, a silent Christian, not out of fear, we are told, but so that he can secretly encourage others, and his faith is only revealed by accident.³⁵ Eustace too only declares his Christianity when the emperor (now Hadrian) orders him to sacrifice to the imperial gods. His expression of regret at Hadrian's false belief draws another mistaken accusation of treachery: "Ov!" seide þe Aumperour "hast þou þus i-seid? / habbe ich þus i-loued þe and þou me hast bi-treid?"³⁶ It is only the arrogant emperor who misinterprets Eustace's Christian concern as political ill will. Although a major point of these stories is to indicate that a vassal's real 'truth' lies with God, the saints' heaven-ward direction of their duty rebukes the abuse of earthly powers through the process of martyrdom alone. God is shown to take care himself of the enemies of his saints, whether pagans or recalcitrant Christians like Henry II, killer of Thomas Becket. Since the martyrs are in the service of God and particularly close to his heart – Christ is a martyr himself – their suffering often brings dire consequences to the persecutors, but the incomparably strong form of their loyal opposition to secular lords is the divine grace won for Christians by the martyrdom itself, a grace from even which those torturing and killing them are able to benefit, as in Christian teaching on the Crucifixion.

Willingness to shed blood for their lord, whether a secular ruler or Christ, is the major currency that martyrs and chivalric heroes have in common. Nevertheless, literary assessments of knightly 'goodness' also open up a significant potential difference between these literary types. To avoid an ideological split between chivalric and Christian forms of goodness requires a special narrative alignment of religious and secular powers, as in hagiography when princes bow to the saints' miraculous display of grace, or in

chivalric manuals and romances when hermits re-educate knights or dominant secular figures act as friends and protectors of the Church, like Malory's Arthur, 'moste noble crystynd kynge'.³⁷ Such texts often treat the secular knight, when rightly directed and motivated, as a pious Christian in God's service, and even imply that knighthood exists principally to allow the knight to be virtuous. Their piety is an augmentation to the prestige of knighthood rather than a potential critique of it. To take one text by an actual chivalric star, in all Henry of Lancaster's self-accusations in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, little or nothing seems to suggest that he has sinned specifically through living as a knight and nobleman, or that knighthood and nobility themselves are questionable as social institutions and ways of life. When he calls himself a wretched and wicked traitor ('cheitif et malveis traître')³⁸ it is because Christ has been crucified for his sins, nothing directly related to his profession of arms. Even when he confesses to a 'wound' of sin through angry speech leading to violence and death,³⁹ or to covetousness of lands, castles, and manors,⁴⁰ or to pride in worldly honour,⁴¹ the implication is that he should amend these individual faults in his conduct, not withdraw altogether from the way of life most prone to such evils. In fact, Henry energetically pursued his career as a premier military and diplomatic associate of Edward III, and achieved through it palatinate status as Duke of Lancaster, a great fortune and the magnificent Savoy palace.⁴² As Catherine Batt shows, Henry through his metaphors of wounds and healing 'emphasises divine mercy, rather than the active exercise of virtue, as primarily reconstitutive of human wholeness'.⁴³ He speaks continually of Christ's humility and his own need for forgiveness, but never in a way that disparages or disables his own status as a leading knight and great lord. He addresses God – 'tresdouz Sire Jesus Crist'; 'beau Sire Dieux' – with the elaborate courtesy of a noble vassal, effectively asserting that he is truly in Christ's service. The decorum of such writing puts Henry a world away from the down-market 'knights' in the mystery plays who frankly do their work for 'castels and corne, / Mych gold in our mayls',⁴⁴ although in some lights he might seem similarly motivated.

Romance is nevertheless capable of offering its own critical perspective on knightly 'goodness'. Chrétien de Troyes' Yvain, a consummate knight, is called 'le mançongier, le guileor, le desleal, le tricheor' ('that liar, that deceiver, that unfaithful cheat')⁴⁵ when he breaks his word to his wife. Yvain has gone off on the tournament

circuit with his friend Gawain, and apparently forgotten all about his marriage. The romance contrasts Yvain's 'doing well' in the masculinist, even narcissistic world of knightly camaraderie with his failure to do well in a deeper moral context:

Aus tornoiemenz vont andui
 par toz les leus ou l'en tournoie;
 et li ans passe tote voie,
 sel fist tot l'an mes sire Yvains
 si bien que mes sire Gauvains
 se penoit de lui enorer,
 et si le fist tant demorer
 que tot li ans fu trepassez.

[B]oth of them frequented the tournaments / wherever there was jousting. / The year passed meanwhile / and all year long my lord Yvain / did so splendidly that my lord Gawain / took great pains to honour him; / and he caused him to delay so long / that the entire year passed.⁴⁶

Gawain and Yvain set up their own tournament 'court', eclipsing Arthur's, with no other purpose than their own glory. As often in Chrétien, Gawain provides a model of ultra-*courtois* chivalric style but his influence is ultimately ineffectual, time-wasting, and even damaging; his actions appear morally and emotionally shallow in relation to those of the protagonists. In Chrétien's Grail romance *Perceval*, as in *Yvain* and in *Lancelot*, the hero's true *voie* is pointedly distinguished from the one Gawain chooses: Yvain runs guilt-maddened from the complacent tournament 'court' into the wild forest; Lancelot takes the more dangerous sword-bridge into Gorre, not the water-bridge that Gawain chooses; Gawain, offered a choice of adventures by the Hideous Damsel, decides to rescue a beleaguered maiden, but Perceval 'redit tot el' ('swore a different oath', lit., 'says entirely otherwise') and goes to find out the mystery of the Grail lance and spear that he earlier neglected.⁴⁷ Gawain's choice of quest looks unexceptionable, but in this context it is very conventional; unlike Perceval's, Yvain's, and Lancelot's choices, it involves no deep emotional attachment and is unrelated to a back-story or a theme of personal development. The Grail romance crystallises in religious terms, if rather obscurely, a continuing sense in Chrétien that being supremely *preux* and *courtois* is not enough, one that may be hinted at as early as the first rather ritualistic combat appearance of 'mon seigneur Gauvain' in *Erec et Enide*:

I wish to speak of my lord Gawain, who fought well and admirably. In the mêlée he struck down Guinzel, and captured Gaudin of the Mountain. He captured knights and won horses alike: my lord Gawain performed very well.⁴⁸

For some romance writers – often in the English tradition – it is very hard to separate military, courtly, and moral kinds of ‘doing well’ and of being a ‘good knight’, but without ever criticising Gawain overtly – he lays Erec open to more direct criticism – Chrétien implicitly contrasts his inconsequential and self-centred version of chivalry with the ‘joy’ that the reformed Erec brings to a whole community by liberating a man and a woman from entrapment in an over-narrow conception of love and honour.

The French *Queste del Saint Graal*, with its perfected hero Galahad, is much more closely aligned than anything by Chrétien to the model of hagiography and imitation of Christ, yet its emphasis on motivation rather than sheer prowess can also be seen as continuing Chrétien’s motif of the ‘heart’. When Lancelot, half-asleep because of the weight of his sins, fails to acknowledge an apparition of the Grail, his horse and armour are symbolically confiscated.⁴⁹ It is a sign that the world has been his real master, so that he is not worthy to be a knight in this specifically Christian quest. Lancelot’s adventure, while referencing Chrétien’s Perceval’s original failure to ask about the Grail procession, also relates to the critical moment in martyrdom stories, when a soldier-saint has to make good with his body whether his deep allegiance is to Christ or the ‘world’ in the shape of the emperor. The difference is that for the acknowledged saint there is no struggle born of human frailty, whereas the ordinary worldly knight must first be humiliated and then emotionally and cognitively converted in a penitential process. As Malory’s Grail version has it, ‘And so [Lancelot] departed sore wepyng and cursed the tyme that he was bore. For tho wordes wente to hys herte, tylle that he knew wherefore he was called so’.⁵⁰ To remain the right kind of Grail knight, Lancelot would have to leave behind forever ordinary chivalry and its allegiance to ‘the world’. Galahad, the perfected knight, will never return to Logres.

Soldier-martyrs’ legends bring about a similar contrast of heavenly and worldly motivation, but by a different means. In them, the demand to worship idols shows earthly lordship and service to be opposed to supreme moral and religious authority, so that the basic supposition of secular romance – that a ‘good knight’ (a militarily effective one) is likely to be a good man doing what he should – is openly put in crisis. The St Christopher legend emblematises a

Christian hierarchy of power based on the history of sin and salvation. Christopher, a pagan giant, has sworn that he will serve only the ‘hext louerd ouer alle men and ondur non oþur nere’.⁵¹ Lacking instruction, he only comes to Christianity by seeing that the king he serves is afraid of the devil and subsequently that the devil is afraid of a cross. Symbolically, while the devil appears as a mighty king ‘wel on horse, with grete nobleye swyþe fierce and proute’,⁵² Christ appears only as a little child that Christopher must carry over a river, with surprising difficulty:

Euere ase he was ouer-ward it gan to heuegy faste;
 And þat watur wax al-so þat Cristofre sore agaste
 To a-drenche þat child þat was so heui – vnneþe he stod atþe laste.
 Neuere so clene he nas ouer-come: at eche stape he grunte and
 blaste [groaned and gasped];
 And laste þat child had a-dreint he ne dorste it a-doun caste.⁵³

Nothing in Christopher’s career as a military strongman has been expressed with the same sense of difficulty, anxiety, and exhaustion – ‘agaste’, ‘vnneþe he stod’, ‘ouercome’, ‘grunte and blaste’ – like Malory’s Gareth and Sir Ironside ‘waggyng, stage-rynge, pantynge, blowynge’.⁵⁴ Christ explains that it has to do with questions of relative power and importance: “‘No wonder, cristofre,” seide þat child “þei ic heuiore were / Þane al þe worlde, ... / For ich made al þe world of nouȝt.”⁵⁵ Christopher’s admission to Christianity has necessitated a change in his form of ‘service’ from military deeds of strength to deeds of penance for sin, with an abandonment of even the threat of aggression. After the meeting with Christ, he practises only the saintly warfare of conversion: humbly winning hearts and minds, not battles, ‘turning’ to Christ all he meets – soldiers sent to capture him, women sent to tempt, and even (posthumously) the pagan king who orders his torments and execution. The king is blinded by an arrow fired at the saint which miraculously turns on himself. He is promised a cure from God by the compassionate martyr:

Þou onselie wrechche,’ seide cristofre ‘ȝwat is nouþe wurth þi miȝte?
 A-ȝein him þat þou hast bi-gonne feble þou art to fiȝte!
 Of þi wrechhede ich habbe reuþe.⁵⁶

When the blood of the saint’s dead body is touched to his eyes, the king will see again, but only “ȝif þou wolt a-riȝt bi-leue”. Believing is ‘seeing’. The miracle is yet another strategy of conversion, through the grace given to the saint to persuade and to

the king to believe and be ‘tournée to cristine-dome’. Finally, Christopher’s martyrdom is understood as the achievement of his original goal: ‘Pus saint Cristofre þene hexte louerd at the laste of-souȝte.’⁵⁷ As in the romance *Ipomedon*, whose proud heroine has sworn to marry only the best knight, the happy narrative resolution depends on the alignment of desire with a delayed perception of the truth, but in this case the perceptual breakthrough concerns not the identity of the greatest knight but the greatest *lord*, and therefore the highest kind of service; earthly knighthood is rendered inferior.⁵⁸

The critical pressure which saints’ lives bring to bear on knightly and militarist values comes therefore not so much from their direct critique of knightly evils as from their lack of primary interest in and respect for secular knightly service. Hagiography ignores or reworks the discursive strategies which in *chanson de geste* and romance connect knightly practices like deeds of arms and *courtoisie* with ideas of supreme excellence, and which appropriate, take for granted or bracket off other modes of virtue. This difference in hagiography occurs, perhaps, partly through its clerical provenance and partly because it often works from early Church materials which predate the rise of Christian chivalry and romance. In saints’ legends, soldiers (and men) have no monopoly on heroism. The heroic currency of the suffering body that in romance belongs mainly to knights in combat belongs instead mainly to martyrs, male and female, and can also be given to other kinds of self-mortifying saints who are ‘steadfast’ in their living.⁵⁹ In hagiographical and clerical tradition, it is not as a soldier that courage can most be shown.

A strong hagiographical reworking of knightly courage can be seen in Ælfric’s tenth-century life of the martyr-king Edmund. Ælfric’s hero offers far more than the ‘pious passivity’ considered typical of the saint’s later medieval image.⁶⁰ While it is true that Ælfric constructs the story around three *imitatio Christi* themes – king, martyr, and virgin⁶¹ – and ‘[t]here is no mention ... of ability as a war leader’,⁶² Edmund also comes across as a very brave man in his own way. Threatened by Danes asking for tribute, like Byrhtnoth in *The Battle of Maldon*, Edmund – ‘swa swa he ful cene wæs’ (‘full brave as he was’)⁶³ – expresses his willingness to die a lord’s death for the love of his people. He treats their deaths at the hands of the Vikings as a sign of their loving service to him. He does not wish to survive his ‘dear thanes’,⁶⁴ as he calls the common people; like a warrior he refuses to take flight:

Næs me næfre gewunelic ðæt ic worhte fleames
 ac ic wolde swiðor sweltan gif ic þurfte
 for minum agenum earde and se ælmyhtiga god wit
 þæt ic nelle abugan fram his biggengum æfre,
 ne fram his soþan lufe, swelte ic lybbe ic.

It was never my custom to take to flight / but I would rather die, if
 I must, / for my own land; and almighty God knoweth / that I will
 never turn aside from His worship, / nor from His true love, whether
 I die or live.⁶⁵

Edmund will not ‘defile his clean hands’ with the Dane’s ‘foul blood’. He is determined to act like Christ in Gethsemane, not like Peter, yet also, like the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, he will not ‘bow’ to the Danish king unless *he* first bows in accepting Christianity. The essential point is that the true ruler of the land and people must be in the service of Christ. For Ælfric, as for the later *South English Legendary* which calls its apparently passive Edmund ‘[s]wyþe fair knyȝt and strong ... and hardi’,⁶⁶ martyrdom narrative provides a way to translate the prestige of patriotic battle courage into a higher and opposed form. As Anke Bernau has pointed out, *The South English Legendary* sees martyrs as ‘hardy knights’ fighting in the rearguard of Christ, the ‘hardy king’, and their tales as true histories superior to fabulous ‘lesynge’ (‘lies’) about ordinary battles.⁶⁷

Had Edmund been successful in war against the Danes, the *vita* could well have followed another model, as Carl Phelpstead notes,⁶⁸ but nevertheless a strong literary tradition allows Ælfric to give the martyr the soldierly virtues of bravery and of loyalty, both to Christ and to the people at large, his ‘thanes’. In imitating Christ, Edmund is also imitating many other Christian soldier saints, some of whom, such as George, Sebastian, Maurice, and the Theban Legion, are also Ælfric’s subjects. When Edmund too throws away his weapons at the appearance of the Danes⁶⁹ he is not being ‘passive’ in the terms of hagiography,⁷⁰ but making the same generically specific display of courage that the other soldier-martyrs have done. Edmund and these heroes never use their knightly courage to resist martyrdom by pagans, only to accept it. That makes them no less heroic, and arguably more so, since they ‘fight’ in a higher service. Then, as saints in heaven, they become powerful ‘military protector[s]’ for the people.⁷¹

In this context it is interesting to look at an early medieval martyr legend that was later revised to build up the narrative

of its hero's chivalry. The early Church tradition of St George concentrated on his extended *passio*, of which Ælfric provides a shortened version in his saints' lives. The story of George's dragon fight and rescue of the princess came to the West only in the twelfth century and was popularised by the thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea*.⁷² One incomplete East Midlands manuscript of the *South English Legendary* (c. 1400) contains it.⁷³ This *vita* begins 'Saynt George the gude knyght a hayly man was he',⁷⁴ emphasising both good knighthood and sanctity, but in the tale's early stages it is the 'hayly man' that predominates. The siege of a Libyan town by a dragon is told in pragmatic terms of so many sheep and children eaten per day, but once the ballot falls on the king's daughter the pathos and drama of the moment emerge in romance style, as her father dresses her in queen's clothing and laments her lost chance of a royal marriage and children: "I wende hafe norischethe in my hall knyghtes of thi body."⁷⁵ When George comes riding by, '[a]ls God walde' (in the *Gilte Legende* it happens 'as by aventure'), the episode becomes fully chivalric: the 'woman ... so fayr' repeatedly begs the knight to save himself; ignoring warnings of certain death, as good knights traditionally do, he comforts her crying and vows to stay – "have no dred, thou swete thyng for I sall note lefe thee"; she praises his "herdy herte".⁷⁶ The scene takes place in full view of onlookers on the town walls, like a romance joust or epic combat, and both narrative focalisation and dialogue are shared between the knight and the maiden to build up a sense of their linked predicament. The fight itself is described in some detail, like a joust or judicial duel – George is on horseback and charges with a lance – and the contrast between the chivalric hero who tames the dragon and the townspeople still comically terrified of it is another common marker of knightly superiority. It seems that the reviser was keen to enliven the traditional concentration on George's *passio* with these new romance touches, and it is unfortunate that the version is unfinished, but the story probably had nowhere to develop along these lines. George already sees himself as sent by God, not privately *en aventure*. He is not available for ordinary romance purposes. The higher purpose of saving the princess and making her lead the dragon to town is to coerce the king and people to convert to Christ; only then will George kill the beast. When that is achieved and a church built, the next steps seem clear from the *Legenda Aurea*. George will donate his reward to the poor, give the king some basic Christian instruction and go on immediately to his long martyrdom. Because his story came to

contain a major combat, George could be briefly dressed up as a romance hero – there are some similar touches in the version in Mirk's *Festial*⁷⁷ – but his legend in various other ways principally illustrates a 'turning' from worldly service: he leaves Cappadocia, where his land and lordship is, for Libya; he will not take rewards (gold or maiden) for saving the city; he gives away his possessions as alms. As in Ælfric's earlier version of the *vita*, the overall shape of George's story bears witness to the pointlessness of either serving a secular ruler (whether the now Christian king in Libya or the pagan emperor) or being one, given the incomparable power difference between earth and heaven:

Ic eom soðlice cristen and ic criste ðeowige.
 Geor[g]ius ic eom gehaten and ic hæbbe ealdor-dom
 on minum earde ðe is gehaten cappadocia.
 and me bet licað to forlætenne nu
 Disne hwilendlican wurðmynt and ðæs wuldor-fullan godes
 cyne-dome gehyrsumian on haligre drohtnunge.

I am verily a Christian and I serve Christ, / 'George' I am called,
 and I hold authority / in my country, which is called Cappadocia, /
 and it liketh me better to forego now / this transitory honour, and to
 minister to the kingdom / of the glorious God in holy service.⁷⁸

Even without the later dragon-fight and rescue, Ælfric's George, rather anglicised as a 'rice ealdor-man',⁷⁹ shows compassion for others; at the point of death he prays for rain in the land of his persecutor.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the story is structured to make a blunt political point: the 'authority' of lordship on earth is nothing to the service of Christ; the heavenly servant is incomparably higher than the earthly lord.

The *South English Legendary* life of St Francis goes even further in translating chivalric prestige directly into religious life by treating the Friars Minor as the highest order of Christian knighthood. After giving his own clothes to an impoverished knight, the young Francis has a dream vision of a noble palace belonging to him and his 'knights', with arms and a cross in the midst. He goes off to be made a knight by a lord in Apulia, '[a]c as wel he myghte habbe ibé atom, thulke travail as vor noght. / Other armes he schulde take wen it were al vorth ibroght'.⁸¹ Christ appears to him in vision and asks which is able to do the most good, the lord or the servant, the rich or the poor. He leads Francis to see that knighthood in the service of an earthly lord would be an inferior, or rather oppositional, choice:

'Thou haddest almeſt', quath this other, 'ichose uniliche [the opposite].
 Vor trust of the hyne [servant], the lord thou forsoke;
 Thou nome uvele thin avision [you misread your vision]: thou most
 thee bet biloke [take more care].'⁸²

In reality Francis's 'knights' will be his friars. The palace is the heavenly joy that awaits him. Knighthood and Christian holiness have a clever ironic relation in this narrative. Francis is rewarded with a chivalric vision after stripping himself to clothe a poor knight, but the lofty nature of the vision relates to the saint's charity to the poor rather than to knighthood as ordinarily understood. The knight has been important only in his role as a poor man. Then, immediately after Francis is told how to read his dream of the palace rightly, he proves his radical new understanding by embracing and giving alms not to a knight this time but to a leper who is evidently a figure for Christ himself: 'Vor our Lord hath so ofte be iseie in hor liche, / Vor in non other fourme of monne me ne may Him so oft isé.'⁸³ The spirit of Matthew 25:40 seems invoked here: 'Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.' To those who see rightly, the leper *is* the Lord and so the best knighthood is in his service. The need to 'see' or 'read' what is 'real' life is literalised in many of the soldier-saint legends in their thematics of conversion. Longinus in the *Gilte Legende* 'saw3 clerly' when the blood of Christ touched his eyes and directly 'renounsid þe kny3thode ... and leuyd the lif of a monke, and myche pepul he tornyd to Ihesu Crist'.⁸⁴ Renouncing knighthood – he has been in the service of Pilate – for a monastic life is, again, to choose the right new master. There is no suggestion he should or could become a literal 'knight of Christ'. Similarly, to call the *fratres minores* ('lesser brothers') 'knights' as Francis's story does is not to consider the values of 'real' knighthood at all: one sign of that is that Francis remains the hero even while most unchivalrously hiding in a ditch 'in hunguer and wrech-hede'⁸⁵ to avoid his merchant father's anger.

The key moment in hagiographical treatment of knighthood is the moment of open confession of faith, when the soldier-saint is ordered to 'turn his thought' and must choose between God and the idols made of wood and stone. Psalm 95:5 of the Vulgate is frequently invoked: *omnes enim dii populorum sculptilia, Dominus autem caelos fecit* ('for all the gods of the peoples ['Gentiles' / 'heathen'] are carved images, but the Lord made the heavens'). Although in these stories the ending often includes or anticipates

the establishment of Christian rule in the place of martyrdom, the adversarial relation established between earthly and heavenly things always remains central. That it means more than a historical Christian/pagan confrontation is shown by the similarity in the *South English Legendary* between the early Church martyr stories and the long *vita* of Thomas Becket, where the heavenly/earthly choice is staged as between the rights of the Church and the rights of the king. Accused of treason by Henry's 'lupere kniȝtes',⁸⁶ who demand he swear an oath of loyalty to the king and barons⁸⁷ (a version of the demand to bow to idols), Becket makes the same kind of argument as the soldier-martyrs do, that he is no traitor but actually seeking the king's honour in trying to reform abuses and refusing to put 'holi chirche under fote'.⁸⁸ The historical knights of the *vita* are godless 'schrewe[s]'⁸⁹ who care only for the king's will, and who rob the treasury after they have killed the saint. Becket himself is, by contrast, knightly: like the early Church soldier-martyrs he concedes the king his own area of 'riȝt and lawe',⁹⁰ but will not subjugate to it the law of heaven (in this case 'holi chirche'); like Edmund before, he proudly rejects flight – "'Sire Reynaud", quath seint Thomas "wenstþou þat ichulle fleo? / Nai par deu, nouȝt a fote for þe king ne for þe";⁹¹ he takes up the cross, without 'opere armes', and scorns to defend the place against attack – "'Man ne schal of holi churche castel maken non";⁹² he demands that others should not be hurt but bravely faces his own death:

Sechez him þat wole ov fleo opur that drede owver þretninge:
Non rediore ne beoth ower swerdes me to deth bringue
Þat min heorte prestore nis þene deþ for-to take;
For þe riȝtes of holi churche I nelle nouȝt det for-sake.⁹³

Whereas the soldier-martyrs of the *Legendary* give examples of both earthly and higher heavenly knightliness, the life of Becket shows up Henry's historical knights as thoroughly vicious because, like the *milites* of the mystery plays, they serve only the idol of their earthly master's rewards.

In romances deeds of arms are often represented as good works, and it is now familiar to read that hagiography and romance have much in common, and are, at their margins, indistinguishable. Yet I would suggest that in the soldier-martyr literature, and in the associated thematics of all martyr stories, a major ideological point of variance between these literary genres is revealed. Although knighthood may be employed in hagiography as a metaphor for

holiness and Christian service, its ordinary status is regularly abased as the literary thought of service and virtue is ‘turned’ towards heaven. George, Eustace, Sebastian, Maurice, Edmund and the rest are all both good knights and holy men, but it is only as martyrs that they really serve Christ, giving their sanctity a pointed political distinction from their earthly profession and allegiance. As a corollary, after openly acknowledging Christ as their lord all these men show the key qualities of knights – loyalty, courage, ‘truth’ – better through martyrdom than they could in any earthly service. In the end, they have everything important in common with martyrs who are not knights – the female virgin martyrs, for instance – and nothing important in common with knights who put earthly service first, the ‘shrews’ who act for Herod or Henry II. It seems that although medieval romance often teaches its audience to treat the secular knight as a figure of actual or potential Christian virtue, the hagiography of martyr-knights offers some strong and conscious resistance to that teaching, insisting on the need to choose between earthly and heavenly allegiance, and adamant that the highest service is to Christ alone. Knight-martyr literature, like the Passion of Christ himself in the mystery plays, was written to provide an important counter-discourse to the romance version of knightly goodness.

Notes

- 1 E.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. a.1; Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91; Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1.; Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2.38, where *Robert of Sicily* seems included as a romance.
- 2 See Richard W. Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), pp. 94–115 (Chapter 5).
- 3 Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Légendes Grecques des saints militaires* (Paris: Picard, 1909), pp. 2, 6.
- 4 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 156.
- 5 MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p. 156.
- 6 The Resurrection, Alabaster Relief Sculpture from the Wallace Collection, University of Cornell. Accession Number: 15/5/3090.01167.
- 7 E.g. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. Accession Number 27.308.
- 8 A further example is Victoria and Albert Museum, A. 61–1926.
- 9 Stephen Spector (ed.), *The N-Town Play. Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*,

- 2 vols, EETS S.S. 11, 12 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Vol. 1, pp. 354–7 and Vol. 2, pp. 519–21. (Hereafter *N-Town Play*.)
- 10 *N-Town Play*, Vol. 1, pp. 356/209–12.
- 11 Richard Beadle (ed.), *The York Plays II*, EETS S.S. 24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 371/179, 376/341, 377/364.
- 12 R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (eds), *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, Vol. 2, EETS S.S. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 342/12. (Hereafter *Chester Mystery Cycle*.)
- 13 *Chester Mystery Cycle*, Vol. 2, p. 345/153.
- 14 *Chester Mystery Cycle*, Vol. 2, p. 349/274–5.
- 15 E.g., in *N-Town Play*, pp. 337–41.
- 16 *N-Town Play*, p. 358/261–2.
- 17 *N-Town Play*, p. 359/303.
- 18 Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley (eds), *The Towneley Plays II*, EETS S.S. 14 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 194/400, 195/423, 198/531. (Hereafter *Towneley Plays II*.)
- 19 *Towneley Plays II*, p. 201/654–5.
- 20 *Middle English Dictionary*, ‘knight’, 2(a).
- 21 *Middle English Dictionary*, ‘knight’, 1(a).
- 22 Richard Hamer (ed.), *Gilte Legende*, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 327–8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006–7), Vol. 2, pp. 697/77–698/81. (Hereafter *Gilte Legende*.)
- 23 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, p. 897/2–4.
- 24 Carl Horstmann (ed.), *The Early South English Legendary*, EETS O.S. 87 (London: Trübner, 1887), p. 178/3. (Hereafter *Early South English Legendary*.)
- 25 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 179/30.
- 26 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 179/31–6.
- 27 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 180/62.
- 28 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 180/73–4.
- 29 A detailed account of the development of both positive and negative views of Christian militarism is given in John Edward Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Damon points out in particular that the onset of the Crusades influenced positive depictions of the soldier saint ‘with his sword drawn at the head of an army’ (p. 282).
- 30 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, p. 695/5–6.
- 31 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, pp. 696–7.
- 32 E.g. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), p. 128: *Mementote dexterarum uestrarum*.
- 33 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, p. 697/63–4.
- 34 *Early South English Legendary*, pp. 394/53–6, 397/155–60.
- 35 *Early South English Legendary*, pp. 16–7/4–24.
- 36 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 401/283–4.

- 37 Thomas Malory, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. Eugene Vinaver, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), Vol. 3, p. 1147/14. (Hereafter *Works of Sir Thomas Malory*.)
- 38 E.J. Arnould (ed.), *Le Livre de seyntz medicines*, Anglo-Norman Text Society 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1940), p. 5. (Hereafter *Le Livre de seyntz medicines*.)
- 39 *Le Livre de seyntz medicines*, p. 17.
- 40 *Le Livre de seyntz medicines*, p. 18.
- 41 *Le Livre de seyntz medicines*, p. 24.
- 42 W.M. Ormrod, 'Henry of Lancaster, First Duke of Lancaster (c. 1310–1361)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com (accessed 17 December 2012).
- 43 Catherine Batt, 'Henry, Duke of Lancaster's Book of Holy Medicines: The Rhetoric of Knowledge and Devotion', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 47 (2006), pp. 407–14, at p. 412.
- 44 *Towneley Plays II*, p. 201/654–5.
- 45 Mario Roques (ed.), *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)* (Paris: Champion, 1978), ll. 2721–2; (hereafter *Le Chevalier au Lion*); Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 329. (Hereafter *Chrétien de Troyes, Arthurian Romances*.)
- 46 *Le Chevalier au Lion*, ll. 2672–9; Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, pp. 328–9.
- 47 Félix Lecoy (ed.), *Le Conte du Graal (Perceval)* (Paris: Champion, 1975), l. 4703; Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, p. 439. See Sara Sturm-Maddox, 'Letres escrites i a: The Marvellous Inscribed', in Keith Busby and N.J. Lacy (eds), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 515–28, at p. 522.
- 48 Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, p. 64.
- 49 E. Jane Burns (trans.), *The Quest for the Holy Grail*, Lancelot-Grail 6 (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2010), pp. 38–40.
- 50 *Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, Vol. 2, p. 895/30–3.
- 51 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 271/8.
- 52 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 272/35.
- 53 *Early South English Legendary*, pp. 273–4/94–8.
- 54 *Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, Vol. 1, p. 323/8–9.
- 55 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 264/104–6.
- 56 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 277/211–13.
- 57 *Early South English Legendary*, pp. 277–8/202–24.
- 58 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, pp. 797/241–798/1.
- 59 See Andrew Lynch, 'Genre, Bodies and Power in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: *King Horn*, *Havelok*, and the *South English Legendary*', pp. 177–96 and Robert Mills, 'The *Early South English Legendary* and Difference: Race, Place, Language, and Belief', pp. 197–222, in Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (eds), *The*

- Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108. The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).
- 60 Anthony Bale, 'Introduction: St Edmund's Medieval Lives', in Anthony Bale (ed.), *St Edmund, King and Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), pp. 1–25, at p. 18.
 - 61 Carl Phelpstead, 'King, Martyr and Virgin: *Imitatio Christi* in Ælfric's *Life of St Edmund*', in Bale, *St Edmund*, pp. 27–44, at p. 28.
 - 62 Phelpstead, 'King, Martyr and Virgin', p. 36.
 - 63 W.W. Skeat (ed.), *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 76 (London: Trübner, 1881), Vol. 2, p. 318/73. (Hereafter *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*.)
 - 64 *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol 2, p. 319/75. Phelpstead points out the 'reversal of the situation in ... *The Battle of Maldon*' ('St Edmund', p. 37).
 - 65 *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol. 2, pp. 320–1/79–82.
 - 66 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 297/5.
 - 67 Anke Bernau, 'A Christian Corpus: Virginité, Violence and Knowledge in the Life of St Katherine of Alexandria', in Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (eds), *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 109–30, at p. 122, referring to *Early South English Legendary*, II, 2.48 and II, 3.56–63.
 - 68 See Phelpstead, 'King, Martyr and Virgin', pp. 39–44.
 - 69 *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol. 2, p. 321/101: 'and awearp his wæpna' / 'and threw away his weapons'.
 - 70 Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 11, cited in Damon, *Soldier Saints*, p. 216.
 - 71 MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p. 236.
 - 72 Henry Summerson, 'George (d. c. 303?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com (accessed 17 December 2012).
 - 73 E. Gordon Whatley, Anne B. Thompson, and Robert K. Upchurch (eds), 'St George and the Dragon', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo: MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), pp. 89–102.
 - 74 'St George and the Dragon', p. 95/1.
 - 75 'St George and the Dragon', p. 97/64.
 - 76 'St George and the Dragon', pp. 97–8/75–96.
 - 77 Susan Powell (ed.), *John Mirk's Festial*, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Vol. 1, p. 118.
 - 78 *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol. 1, p. 308/25–32.
 - 79 *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Vol. 1, p. 308/6.
 - 80 See Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), pp. 31–2.

- 81 'St Francis', in Whatley et al., *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections*, p. 267/23–4.24.
- 82 'St Francis', p. 267/30–2.
- 83 'St Francis', p. 268/58–9.
- 84 *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 2, p. 212/5–12.
- 85 'St Francis', p. 269/83–102.
- 86 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 163/1967.
- 87 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 163/1984–92.
- 88 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 163/1995.
- 89 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 166/2097.
- 90 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 163/1994.
- 91 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 165/2045–6.
- 92 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 165/2057–66.
- 93 *Early South English Legendary*, p. 166/2071–4.

3

Englising the saints in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*

Kate Greenspan

In medieval England, as elsewhere, episodes from the lives of the saints constituted one of the most common sources of story, both for layfolk and professional religious. Saints were popular heroes in every genre, held up for admiration, imitation, a good laugh, or the relief of a despairing heart. In their piety and love of God, saints provided models for all of Christendom. Their deeds could be recast for specialised purposes: to demonstrate, for example, how to wield earthly power, conduct oneself appropriately towards superiors or inferiors, resist oppression, or recognise the sins arising from inborn qualities. In Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (begun in 1303) the saints contribute far more narrative elements than any of his other sources. Ten of its sixty-three exempla recount episodes from saints' lives; at least fifteen more include the intercession by, prayers to, or mention of, saints; another dozen record saintly behaviour, though the characters are not necessarily saints themselves; half of the exempla were taken by Mannyng or the author of his source, the *Manuel des Pechiez*, from the writings of saints, like Gregory's *Dialogues* or Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. These are supplemented by many references to saintly authority within the poem's discursive framework, in which Mannyng explains the principles the exempla illustrate. In particular, though, Mannyng sees in the saints an array of opportunities to define the English character. In his view, the preacher who distinguishes the English from their fellow Christians in other lands can best teach his parishioners to recognise their own native strengths and weaknesses. Foreign saints 'touredne ... On englyssh tonge out of frankys' can both illuminate aspects of the Englishman's nature and lend their authority to his translation, a linguistic and a cultural project intended to help parish priests instruct laymen in the sacrament of penance.

Mannyng adopts a number of strategies to shape hagiographic material to his contemporaries' growing sense of English national

identity: representing England as a once-and-future Christian Eden; alerting his audience to aspects of the stories that bear on their own lives as members of a parish, social group, profession, or other entity within English society; altering foreign settings by adding or omitting details he finds in his sources to create a notional English world that his audience can experience as familiar. He also implies that the native and foreign saints whose stories he tells bear a special relation to Englishmen. By these means, Mannyng uses the saints to articulate his central concern, how Catholic teaching on confession should adapt itself to the requirements of the English, whom he calls ‘by nature high of heart’ and shows to be forthright, wilful, prone to action rather than reflection, and envious.

That *Handlyng Synne* seeks to delineate national character at the same time as it serves its larger mission of teaching the laity the art of ‘handlyng synne ... with honde’ raises a perplexing question: how did Mannyng intend his book to be used? He does not specify. Modern scholars have called it, variously, a collection of exempla, a preaching aid, a moral handbook, and a penitential manual to teach priests to elicit confession according to forms established by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. None of these designations quite captures *Handlyng Synne*’s design or genre, nor do they clarify who actually used the book or in what ways and under what circumstances its lessons were delivered.¹ It is clear, however, that *Handlyng Synne* was not intended as an exemplum collection, any more than Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, or the *Heptameron* of Margaret of Navarre are mere collections of stories. Like those later works, however, *Handlyng Synne* has a dramatic framework which incorporates the tales into a larger narrative. But *Handlyng Synne*’s frame resembles an informal sermon rather than a unifying account of exile, convivial pastime, or pilgrimage. Only one speaker exists in *Handlyng Synne*’s frame, whom Mannyng – specifically and in great detail – identifies as himself. Like Chaucer’s Narrator in the *Canterbury Tales*, he often speaks in a familiar, sometimes gossipy tone,² making wry comments and ironic asides as he admonishes, encourages, and explains the principles his tales illustrate to a multifarious audience outside of his text, whose differences in social standing, sex, occupation, and education he repeatedly acknowledges.

The frame departs as well from the standard devices used by some Latin collections, like Caesarius of Heisterbach’s *Dialogue on Miracles* or Johannes Nider’s *Formicarius*, which set their stories

within a didactic dialogue between Monk and Novice or Master and Student. Such frames make no effort to characterise the speakers or address the reader or auditor directly. Their tone is formal; appropriate questions are raised by the one speaker and answered by the other with a degree of dispassion that never mars *Handlyng Synne*'s narrative verve.

If he did not look to Latin exempla collections as models for his collection's frame, neither did Mannyng choose to recreate the narrator he found in the frame of his source, the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Pechiez*. Though that speaker, who remains anonymous, addresses his readers directly, he does so in impersonal, even dispassionate tones. No individuality colours his discourse; his conception of his audience is equally uniform and flat.

A similar passion and energy, however, especially in rejecting the French language as a suitable medium for speaking to an English audience, can be found in other near-contemporary English vernacular collections of preachable materials, like the *Northern Homily Cycle* and the *Cursor Mundi*. But *Handlyng Synne* differs significantly from these as well by virtue of Mannyng's opinionated narrative persona, who not only rejects the French language, but substitutes less common English words (which he defines) for Anglo-Norman words in current use³ and, further, explains the differences between the French and English character that make his linguistic choices reasonable and proper. He more than implies that people cannot absorb the lessons on sin and confession unless they learn first to recognise in themselves the qualities that make them who they are; a common language, history, and geography, more than class or calling, determine proclivity toward vice and virtue. The lessons that the saints can teach, therefore, also depend upon the self-awareness, the consciousness of identity, of those who are to admire and imitate them.

A sense of the world as essentially English pervades the work. While the immediate audience for *Handlyng Synne* was the English parish priest, the ultimate audience Mannyng wanted to reach consisted of lay men and women, but especially those who 'blethly here / Yn gamys, yn festys, & at the ale, ... trotouale [trifles]' (ll. 46–8). These are people who are fond of romance, of tales of wonder, and of fabliaux. Mannyng uses rhymed octosyllabics, the line characteristic of the romances and other 'trifles' that people love to *hear*; what is more, as mentioned above, his narrative voice, especially in the frame, is distinctively 'spoken'. *Handlyng Synne*'s orality contributes to its appeal to such folk. But Mannyng had to

do more than simply tell good stories; he had to make his listeners identify with his characters, not just by using the usual 'I' and 'thou' characteristic of vernacular sermons, but through his choice of language, location, and national identity, and the opportunities he provides for imitation.⁴ These are comprehended in his prologue, where he famously announces his choice, '[o]n englyssh tonge to make thys boke'.⁵

We know from his introduction that Mannyng intended his exempla to entertain as well as instruct and that he wanted to seduce his lay audience away from their accustomed narrative pleasures. He does this by appropriating the most attractive devices of vernacular storytelling, like memorable rhymes, supernatural obstacles, and titillating, slightly scandalous plots.⁶ He recognised that teaching the kind of self-critical reflection required by confession posed a particular challenge for the preacher: models of good behaviour are in general more difficult to make interesting than bad ones. Nevertheless, some popular compilations of saints' lives, like the *South English Legendary*, did provide a precedent for using saints to entertain and hold an audience, for they tend to subordinate theological matters to an appealing style, as does *Handlyng Synne*. A significant part of that appeal is the verse itself, the conventional vehicle for popular romance and fabliaux, memorable, familiar, full of excitement.

The appetite for romance in particular could also be satisfied by some of the conventions the genre shares with saints' legends, chief among them the construction of heroism. Thomas Heffernan offers this useful distinction:

The difference between the heroism of the saint and that of the romance hero is analogous to the difference between dependent and autonomous actions: the saint is moved whereas the romance hero moves. The sacred biographer locates the locus for the heroism, the correct behavior of the saint, in the gift of Providence. The romance hero is depicted as self-directed, the motivation for correct behavior coming from personal choice.⁷

With that in mind, we can see that saints' legends in *Handlyng Synne* offer the active, unreflective Englishman an attainable model of virtuous behaviour. Both the saint and the romance hero meet impossible, thrilling, sometimes supernatural challenges with steadfastness, integrity, and faithfulness. Secular men and women hearing their stories can *choose*, like the heroes of romance, to approach the realm of the saints through the ritual of confession,

a form of initiation into that select and exciting community. So not only are the stories Mannyng offers wonderful, they also inspire the normally unreflective Englishman to imitate the hero's *aventure* in search of his identity as he pursues the saint's blissful reward.

In her discussion of Mannyng's poem *The Chronicle of England*, Rhonda Knight has argued that he wanted to define the community of English speakers to themselves:

Language, according to Mannyng, not only brings people together but creates community among those who do come together ... In both his translation projects, Mannyng provides spiritual and cultural edification for the unlearned Anglophone audience. *Handlyng Synne* directs itself to 'the laity in need of moral instruction in English',⁸ and the *Chronicle* brings to the English 'their history', which they share 'in felawschip when thai sitt samen'. The *Chronicle* implies that community not only depends on language but also on a common history and shared textual experience.⁹

The 'surge' of English nationalism between 1290 and 1340 described by Derek Pearsall¹⁰ encompasses Mannyng's composition of *Handlyng Synne* (1303) and the *Chronicle* (1338). Both works depend for their narrative appeal, to differing degrees and in somewhat divergent ways, on that sense of 'common history and shared textual experience'. His strategies include, in both cases, appropriation of non-English histories, hagiographies, and legends; definitions of what it means to be English; the implication of English origins and the effacement of foreign ones; direct statements promoting the English language and things English over their foreign counterparts; and, especially in *Handlyng Synne*, replacement of the supranational Christian community with the English parish as the primary source of the identity to which he wants his audience to subscribe.

Mannyng's adaptation of the *Manuel des Pechiez* preceded the composition of the *Chronicle* by some twenty-five years; the latter's aim, to transform the history of the British into the history of the English, though not yet explicit, begins to take shape in *Handlyng Synne*. Mannyng's aim in the earlier work is somewhat different: to distinguish the English Christian from Christians in general. To that end, Mannyng 'naturalises' several foreign saints, representatives of the Body of Christ in which all believers participate, as one might naturalise daffodils in the rear garden. He does this without comment, erasing their national origins while implying that they

have a special relationship to English Christians, who remain apart from the rest of the Christian world, yet at the same time occupy an important place in Christendom.

The aforementioned 'shared textual experience' on which Mannyng draws is based, in the case of religious material, largely on the exemplum. As Tony Davenport explains, exempla tend to focus on more or less realistic situations whose credibility is damaged by elements of the fantastic, the grotesque, and the supernatural.¹¹ But in hagiographical and related supernatural narratives the presence of the peculiar is highly anticipated and appreciated. As a marker of the genre it reinforces the story's validity and encourages *admiranda*. Indeed, without fantastic and grotesque elements, the saintly presence becomes *less* 'recognisable and transferable', in Davenport's words. Mannyng's tactic of nativising saints brings them more deeply still within the realm of the 'common types' and 'likely situations'¹² that constitute saints' legends, in that he suggests that the saints have a particular connection with the lives of the English auditors. Drawing upon the above-mentioned Christian heroic ideals of self-sacrifice, spiritual and physical integrity, and utter dedication to God rather than upon unstable political or ideological categories, he imagines a Christian community defined by the distinctive Englishness of the monastery, manor, parish, individual. His English sinners – the Norfolk knight who lets his cattle defile the churchyard, the three dishonest Kesteven executors, the London perjurer, the miserly Cambridgeshire parson, the backbiting monk (whose famous English abbey Mannyng declines to name) – illustrate the particular defects of the native character, to which he offers the remedies of confession and the example of the saints. The saints themselves do not always behave well (another way they connect with sinful humankind), but they rise to heroism through exercise of the heroic virtues, thereby offering the English not just a way to Heaven, but a path to political pre-eminence. By becoming the best Christians, the English also become the best nation.

To the same end Mannyng introduced English historical markers, as he does just before the tale of the Priest's Concubine, which took place, he says, in the time of 'gode Edward – / Edward, syre Henryes sone' (Edward I, son of Henry III, who died in 1307, just a few years before the completion of *Handlyng Synne*). Mannyng's references to English locations, recent times, current customs, and other familiar material could be added or omitted by

the preacher as his flock required. Just as the deeds or writings of particular saints lent their authority to his arguments, Mannyng and his readers could apply history flexibly to support a tale's credibility. Both saintly heroism and appeals to the audience's sense of participation in England's heroic past tightened the weave of discourse and exemplum.

Mannyng introduces the theme of a specifically English style of Christianity early in the first section,¹³ in his discussion of the Third Commandment. A 170-line disquisition on keeping the days the Church sets aside as holidays introduces the tale of the Vine-Storms (801–980). Both exemplum and explanation advance an argument for the superiority of a special English practice over a fruitless foreign one. The tale tells of an Italian town whose vines are destroyed by storms to punish the inhabitants for working on Saturday. An English priest advises the local folk to adopt the English custom of knocking off work at noon on Saturday in honour of the Virgin. This they do, and the storms cease. But one man swears he will continue to labour in the old way. The moment he strikes the earth with his mattock,¹⁴ he drops dead. The prayers of the priest and the people bring him back to life, whereupon he acknowledges the righteousness of the English custom, which, we understand, may appropriately be practiced '*vtre mer*' (though not *vice versa*). In the virtuous clergyman who saves his fellow Christians even though they are not of his nation, we see, early in the poem, the roots of the case Mannyng will make for both the unique character of the English and their participation in the diverse spiritual kingdom of Christ. His introduction, in fact, locates a kind of Golden Age of Christian practice in England:

Sum tyme hyt was wnt to be doun
 To halewe the satyrday at the noun –
 Namlyche, yn ynglande;
 And nawher so moche, y vndyrstand,
 Whan that custum was wnt to be,
 Than was grace, and grete plente.¹⁵

In the old days it was the custom / to hallow the Saturday at noon, /
 namely in England; / and never as much, so I understand, / as when
 that custom was upheld, / was there grace, and great plenty.

Although the priest is not himself a saint, his intercession on behalf of the Italian peasants puts him, if not in saintly company, at least in its neighbourhood. Moreover, Mannyng evokes Golden Age imagery in the frame to establish the superiority of English

over foreign religious cultures. He represents England as a fallen paradise, but one whose original blessedness still has force in the world; the English need not be saints to exercise saintly power. They are pleasing to God, not only as worthy participants but as first among Christendom's equals. The tale of the Vine Storms puts them on the right side of divine power; like saints, they exemplify the action of grace in the world.

Although Mannyng translates the exemplum from the French, the discussion that frames and interprets it is his own. Even so loose a translation as *Handlyng Synne* generally sticks to the original story, while departing in style, vocabulary, detail, or emphasis. But a translator who has his own agenda, as Mannyng does, may add to these strategies more radical kinds of alteration. The tales of the Irish St Fursey, the German carollers of Colbek, and the Italian saints Eutychius and Florentius demonstrate some of the ways in which Mannyng nativises foreign saints to increase the sense of common culture and purpose among English laymen. The specifics of geography and history in which the saints and sinners act prepare the way, not for a more general representation that would allow *any* Christian to identify with them, but for a new kind of specificity: English geography, English history, and English sin.

Mannyng illustrates the Seventh Commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal', with the well-known story of St Fursey's vision of Purgatory, in which he is punished for his failure to pray for a usurer, as he had promised to do.¹⁶ The vision overcame him in Ireland, where he remained for at least twelve more years before embarking on a mission to East Anglia. But Fursey's origins and great accomplishments in Ireland were of little use to Mannyng, and he leaves them out of this exemplum. In his account, which, drawing on Bede's account, doubles the length of the French original, Fursey's vision of the otherworld unfolds outside of geography and history; Mannyng never mentions where Fursey's body was while he was entranced. Nevertheless, Mannyng does not remove him from the world – just from Ireland, a country for whose people he shows scant regard in his later *Chronicle of England*.¹⁷ But in the lesson following the exemplum he explains Fursey's significance for Englishmen:

He was ferst foundur and syre
Of the cherche of knares myre,
And of Norwyche the modyr cherche
He dede hyt ferst make & werche.¹⁸

He was the first founder and the sire / of the church of Knaresmyre /
and of the mother church at Norwich, / which he founded and built.

Although St Fursey remained fifteen years in England, he founded but two churches in Norwich and York before he left for Normandy in 648. And although in France, as Bede relates, he performed many miracles and founded a monastery, a minster, and three chapels before his death in 650, Mannyng makes less of that part of Fursey's life than of his sojourn in East Anglia:

And there he lyth bezund the se,
He ordeynde a mynstyr for to be;
Four zere ar the cherche were ful set
Was hys saule to heuene fet.¹⁹

And there he lies beyond the sea, / [where] he ordained a minster. /
Four years ere the church was finished / his soul was fetched to God.

The lack of detail in this tiny passage underscores Mannyng's indifference to Fursey's activities on non-English soil. Where did he go? Beyond the sea. What did he do? Ordained a minster and died. In contrast, in England he was *founder* and *sire* of Knaresmyre, the *first maker* of the *mother church* in Norwich. These words – the nouns 'founder' and 'syre', the qualifier 'mother', the verbs 'make' and 'work', the named locations of the two churches – help to stress, in concrete terms, Fursey's role as a founder-saint in England. What he did elsewhere offers, in Mannyng's account, no purchase for the imagination. Thus Fursey becomes an English saint because we cannot imagine him anywhere else. Though a member of the Hiberno-Scottish mission to England, he is in this exemplum neither Irishman nor Briton nor Frenchman, but an Englishman, through whom

Y trowe god shewed thys meruayle
for thou ne shust of thy trouthe fayle.²⁰

I believe God showed this marvel / so that you [the English audience] should never fail of devotion.

We are reminded by these two lines of one of the most important functions of hagiography: to provide a model for imitation. Fursey's authority as a model for Englishmen is established through the emphasis on his foundations in England, but his imitability lies in his repentance for having failed to complete a promise. The vision teaches the lesson about keeping one's word;

the distorted history tells the audience why they should take this particular example to heart.

As he does in the story of Fursey, Mannyng almost triples the brief account of the Cursed Carollers of Colbek he finds in the *Manuel des Pechiez*. Many of his additions reflect his delight in action rather than analysis. They also firmly express his nationalising agenda: he Englished the history and geography of this exemplum more overtly and extensively than any other. His Englishing of the saint, however, is more subtle. Mannyng introduces the tale by enumerating the sacrilegious carryings-on of layfolk in the churchyard – ‘Karolles, wrastelynges ... somour games, entyrludydes, ... syngynge, ... tabure bete’ and ‘outher pypynge’ (ll. 8991–6) – that disturb the priest’s prayers. He adds:

Y shal 3ow telle a ful grete chaunce,
And y trowe the most that fel
Ys as soth as the gospel.
And fyl thys chaunce yn thys londe,
Yn yngland, as y vndyrstonde;
Yn a kynges tyme that hyghte Edward,
Fyl thys chaunce that was so hard.²¹

I shall tell you of a very great occurrence / and I believe that most of it / is as true as the gospel. / And this occurrence happened in this land, / in England, as I understand. / In the time of a king called Edward, / this occurrence befell that was so hard.

Before the tale begins, then, Mannyng makes us aware that this ‘true history’ – ‘soth as the gospel’ – took place in England under Edward the Confessor (1043–66). The *Manuel des Pechiez* makes no comparable claim for location or date, except to remark that the church in the tale was dedicated to St Magnus, ‘en franceis seiut grant’ (l. 6942; ‘meaning “great” in French’) – an observation Mannyng declines to translate.

A group of twelve carollers has come to the church of St Magnus in Colbek²² – Mannyng moves the entire story from Germany to England, a feat not attempted in the *Manuel*, which omits any specific mention of the story’s setting – to revel in the churchyard, just as the priest approaches the altar to perform Christmas mass. He orders them to leave off, but when they defy him, he appeals to God and St Magnus to wreak vengeance on the carollers by making them dance for a twelvemonth. The curse locks the carollers

together, holding hands, dancing, singing over and over again the ironic refrain,

Equitabat beuo per siluam frondosam,
Ducebat secum merswyndam formosam,
Quid stamus, cur non imus.

'By the leued wode rode beuolyne,
Wyth hym he ledde feyr merswyne.
Why stonde we? Why go we noght?'²³

By the leafy wood rode Bevo, / with him he led fair Merswyde. /
Why stand we here, why go we not?²⁴

The churchyard in which the carollers dance, Mannyng explains, is attached to the church of St Magnus the martyr and his sister, St Bukcestre.²⁵ There is little in Magnus's legend to connect him with England, apart from his choice to refrain from fighting in Wales, a detail as irrelevant to Mannyng's Cursed Carollers as the honour in which St Magnus was held in France. In the exemplum, Magnus himself, his legend unmentioned, never appears in person. He is cited only as the means by which the priest oversteps his authority and curses the dancers. But in correcting the manifest sin and revealing the hidden one, Magnus exercises a form of the special solicitude that, Mannyng implies, Christian saints extend to the English. Through Magnus's power, the carollers become an example that speaks directly to their countrymen, who identify not only with the sinful impulse, but with the careless sinners, who belong to a parish similar to their own. Like the workman in the tale of the Vine Storms, their dramatic example also impresses foreigners, represented by the Emperor Henry and the Pope and including the nameless foreigners in all the lands through which the unfortunate carollers continue to dance. Magnus also punishes Priest Robert, who loses his authority, his daughter, and his life, for calling upon a power he cannot and should not hope to control.

Moreover, by acting in concert with St Edith of Wilton, at whose grave one of the dancers is healed, Magnus represents one of two sides of the same power that both punishes and forgives. The separation of powers is perhaps gendered, Magnus standing for a judgemental God, Edith for a mediating Mary; it may also be a national one, the transplanted Norseman and the English noblewoman demonstrating the harmony of heavenly grace. So Magnus, like Fursey, is implicitly nativised, as we see him working only in England and we know nothing else about him. He is English by

default. The carollers, like the Venetian peasant who refused the English priest's advice, are punished as the result of an English priest's invocation of supernatural power; and the whole Christian world, from Albion, to Saxon Kölbigk, to Rome, is instructed by them. Magnus, then, shows the English the way to become model Christians who will ultimately stand at the head of their fellows in the sight of God.

In the epilogue, Mannyng explains that the tale was written by Pope Leo IX and copied in many chronicles beyond the sea, 'more than is in this country'. He warns that 'in this stede' – in England – some hold this tale to be a trifle, but in other places, people hold it a great marvel. This comment provides his otherwise unexpressed rationale for Englishing the tale as specifically as he has done. Had he told the story as he found it – a wonder that took place far away among foreigners – the English audience would feel no particular connection with it. It would truly be, like other versions in circulation, an entertaining 'trotouale'. But he makes it both marvellous and important by translating it from elite Anglo-Norman into good, sturdy English, and by translating setting, characters, and the powerful St Magnus to England. Thus Mannyng recreates the story as a part of English history that the unlettered Englishmen whom *Handlyng Synne* is intended to instruct will not perceive as a trifle – because it is about themselves.

Mannyng reserves his most complex and extended argument for the third deadly sin, envy, which he defines as the characteristic failing of the English. In *Handlyng Synne*, as we have noted, Mannyng's ever-present voice integrates exemplum and frame, strengthening their connection as he develops his definition of the English character.²⁶ In the case of the exemplum that illustrates envy, though, Mannyng eschews explicit nativising of the saint or the locale, instead making the case for its special relevance to the English in the closing frame. Furthermore, Mannyng discusses envy in other contexts throughout *Handlyng Synne*, up to the point where he focuses on the third deadly sin specifically. The larger context makes clear envy's importance to English sinners, especially to clerics, in whom the sin is particularly pernicious. That English clerics are prey to envy imperils the spiritual health of all the English, and the exemplum shows us an instance of the damage it can do to sinners and saints alike.

What is envy? Of all the sins, it is the one that hurts the sinner the most. The envious man is always sorrowful, depressed, driven by a desire for vengeance, only happy, and that fleetingly, when

the object of his envy is brought low. He may take action against his foes by means of backbiting or treason, or he may gnaw at his own insides. The envious man turns good to evil; he is like the devil and shall fare the worst of all men; he shall have no gladness, nor shall he be worthy of joy in the afterlife. Envy makes its first appearance in the second of two exempla (ll. 1547–92) used to illustrate the Fifth Commandment, ‘Thou shalt no man sle’. It illustrates a form of ‘soul murder’ by means of backbiting, a complex sin compounded of wrath, pride, and envy – ‘Bakbyter thurgh ryght resun / Of three mennys deth ys enchesun [occasion]’ (ll. 1523–5) – slaying first himself, then those who believe his lies, and finally, the one about whom he has lied. Mannyng returns to backbiting in his discussion of the first deadly sin, pride. The first three exempla and their surrounding commentary concern the many sources of pride and some of its manifestations. But rhetorical precedence goes to backbiting, the final aspect of pride Mannyng illustrates, in the tale of a venomous English monk, which comes from the *Manuel des Pechiez* by way of Thomas of Cantimpré and Odo of Cheriton, among others.²⁷ In it, the nighttime apparition of the backbiting monk (whose name Mannyng says he will not betray) appears before one of his brothers. A ‘foule thyng, and a grysly’, he has to spend eternity chewing on his burning tongue.

Though the emphasis of the exemplum is on ‘wykked wurdys’, Mannyng rings an interesting change on his source. The *Manuel des Pechiez* mentions, in this place, giving ‘mauueis cunsail ... par coueitisie ou par envie’ (ll. 3676–7) – bad counsel through *covetousness* or envy – offering us a choice between two evils, neither of which is the subject of the chapter. Mannyng translates the phrase as ‘Hyt may be *pryde with enuye*’ (l. 3638), yoking pride and envy into one wicked team that drags Englishmen to perdition. Wrath, too, overlaps with pride in that the wrathful often chide or even murder when they should be patient. But it also overlaps with envy ‘ful of felunnye’, the third deadly sin.

The exemplum and the discussion surrounding envy focus on the class most critically affected by the sin, professed religious men. While Mannyng does address this failing in the laity, the exemplum and most of his commentary concern envy within religious communities. This has important implications for his primary audience, secular priests competing with mellifluous friars for the attention of lay congregations. Priests must be aware that they themselves, like their parishioners, are by their nature as

Englishmen prone to envy, a failing most difficult to detect and root out. Its effects can be disastrous to the clergy and, consequently, to the lay communities for which they are responsible.

The Tale of St Florens and His Bear (ll. 4001–132)²⁸ looks at envy from a more earthly point of view than did the Tale of the Monk with the Burning Tongue. According to Gregory's *Dialogues*, Ss Eutychius and Florentius were sixth-century hermits pursuing the ascetic life together outside Norcia. When Eutychius was called as abbot to a nearby monastery, God sent Florentius a tame bear to guard his sheep. The official legend holds that Eutychius' disciples became envious of Florentius' fame and killed the bear. Florentius predicted that the wrath of God would fall upon them, but when they got leprosy and died, he felt himself to have been their murderer and wept for them for the rest of his life.

Mannyng's version omits inconvenient details, such as the location of the story and St Florentius' remorse, but stresses the central sin of which the envious disciples are guilty: feeling that their abbot, and therefore their foundation are being robbed of due worship by the fame of Florens' bear. As punishment, God afflicts them with measles, so that their limbs rot before their eyes and they go about the earth stinking. Despite its disastrous consequences to the envious brothers, Mannyng spends few specific lines on the sin of envy. He first mentions it halfway through the story, when the disciples appear (ll. 4082–6), again when Florens cries for God's vengeance (l. 4119), and finally in the epilogue: 'therefore Gregory tells us this tale to show what a cursed sin is envy' (ll. 4135–6). Nevertheless, Mannyng nails the lesson fast to the English clergy.

The introduction to the sin of envy begins with a formula used in oral delivery, 'Loke now tharfore', and proceeds to draw a portrait of it by means of the if–then formula of the penitentials. But though Mannyng describes the many kinds of envy of which any person might be guilty, he chooses an exemplum that shows the sin at work in a specifically monastic setting. The signs of the sin are present, not as an individual matter – we can't tell one monk from another – but as a matter of the monastery's integrity. The monks bring disgrace upon the institution, becoming public examples of envy's horrible consequences. As they, members of the body of Christ, are contaminated, so their own limbs become contaminated. The monks are microcosms of Christendom plagued by sin, of English Christendom plagued by envy. In the monastery, the place whose mission is to reproduce on earth the harmony of

Heaven, where the monks carry out their charge to pray for the community beyond its walls, the presence of this mortal sin threatens to undermine the entire spiritual enterprise.

In the closing commentary, Mannyng makes his essential connection between envy and the Englishman. Envy, he says, is Lucifer's sin, the one that brought about his expulsion from Heaven – and in this part of the passage he sticks close to the *Manuel des Pechiez*. But the *Manuel* goes on to retell the story of the Fall, whereas Mannyng explains that

And englys men namely,
Are thurgh kynde of herte hy
A forbysen ys told thys,
Seyd on frenshe and on englys
That frenshe men synne yn lecherye
And englys men yn enuye.²⁹

Englishmen, namely, / are by nature high of heart. / A proverb tells this, / said about Frenchmen and English, / that Frenchmen sin in lechery / and Englishmen in envy.

This explanation is his own, as is his comparison between the sins:

Lecherye ys fleshly synne;
Enuye cumth of the soule wyth ynne.
Lecherye ys the lesse we fynde,
And enuye ys the more vnkynde.³⁰

Lechery is fleshly sin; / envy comes from the soul within. / Lechery is the less, we find, / and envy is the more unnatural.

The contrast between the French and English sins is instructive. French lechery is experienced in the body, but is outwardly directed toward the object of desire and is completed by action. English envy, on the other hand, takes root within the mind. It may or may not issue in words or deeds – action is not necessary for its completion. Like the Englishman's traditional strengths – forbearance, restraint, firm resolve – envy too calls upon reticence, taciturnity, and suppression of emotion. Mimicking English self-control, envy overcomes the sinner from within and is, therefore, extremely difficult to recognise and to combat before it has worked its evil effects. Given the gravity of envy, Mannyng quite properly omits from his tale St Florentius' grief and guilt at the monks' death. His eagerness to delineate the English sin allows him to ignore other lessons potentially offered by Florentius' legend – the ill consequences of calling on God's power to curse, for example,

or the necessity of showing proper remorse for having sinned – in favour of Christian teaching tailored to remedying the hidden flaw in the stalwart English character.

Peter Ackroyd sums up one of the problems Mannyng had to tackle in writing *Handlyng Synne*, that is, formulating a sufficiently precise definition of Englishness:

Englishness is the principle of diversity itself. In English literature, music and painting, heterogeneity becomes the form and type of art. This condition reflects both a mixed language comprised of many different elements and a mixed culture comprised of many different races. That is why there is also, in the products of the English imagination, a characteristic mixing or blurring of forms.³¹

Mixed language and culture never can quite be boiled down to a single set of common characteristics or interests, even in a world where people were taught to identify themselves first as Christians, and only then as members of a nation, a class, or a family. That lesson is counterintuitive; experience, not authority, governs the tastes and habits of most individuals. Mannyng, like many pastoral writers of his time, understood that differences among groups of people (social standing, sex, profession) require individual ‘handlyng’. But he also recognised that those universal categories captured neither the diversity nor the commonalities he saw in his fellow Englishmen. Because he subscribed to the view that English people should be instructed in their own tongue, he not only translated the *Manuel des Pechiez* but took care to use and define native words even where French words were more commonly employed; because he knew that the parish described the physical limits of most people’s lives, he used recognisable English settings where he could and familiar, if indeterminate landscapes where he could not; because he understood language and geography to determine culture, he stressed the superiority of English habits and practices; and because he saw English people as the product of all these forces, he looked for and found qualities of behaviour and outlook that distinguished them from Christians elsewhere in the world. For Mannyng’s purposes in *Handlyng Synne*, the Universal Christian has to give way to the English Christian, an individual who wishes to be addressed in his own language, in terms he understands, in genres he enjoys, culminating in lessons he can apply to his own life as he lives it, rather than as he is supposed to live it.

Thus, in the place where the saint’s legend intersects with

the tastes and habits Mannyng identifies among his tale-loving countrymen, his translation not only turns a long verse narrative ‘on englyssh tunge out of frankys’, it also ‘translates’ saintly relics in literary form – legends and writings – from foreign contexts to English ones. He ‘translates’ genres as well, recasting original Latin prose narratives in rhymed octosyllabics, a metre grateful to the ear of lay men and women who blithely listen to exciting stories of heroes and monsters.

Finally, though, the point of Englishing the saints goes beyond the narrow definition of national identity to the crafting of a supra-national one. For Robert Mannyng, as for William of Pagula, John Mirk, and others who tackled the problem of instructing parish priests in the art of addressing the laity, Christendom was not a community of ‘evene Cristens’, but of *kinds* of Christians, with the special vices and virtues of their class, sex, age, and nation. In this view, foreign saints were not intimates, not family, not part of England’s history. Mannyng’s bestowal of Englishness upon them connects the history and experience of the English layman to the heroism of the saint, supplying the means by which, ultimately, the midwife in Chester, the brewer in Kempe, the Oxford grocer, the tapestere in Lynn, the Devonshire dairymaid, and the London scribe might sit down together with their brothers and sisters from other lands in the communion of saints.

Notes

- 1 Scholars disagree about whether English sermons were ever delivered, whole or in part, in verse. If Mannyng and others intended the rhyme to remain on the page, its function must have been chiefly to aid the preacher’s memory as he recast the exempla and their lessons in prose. On the other hand, the prologue to the *Northern Homily Cycle* instructs clerics ‘to read aloud from their copy of the verse-homilies to the laity assembled at Sunday Mass’ (Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290–1340* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996], p. 31), evidence that verse did, on occasion at least, have a legitimate place in vernacular preaching.
- 2 See S.E. Phillips, *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007) for an illuminating discussion of Mannyng’s appropriation of gossip’s strategies to make his exempla appealing and memorable.
- 3 Elizabeth Dearnley gives a detailed account of Mannyng’s ‘Englished’ vocabulary in “‘On Englyssh Tunge Out of Frankys’: Translation and “Tourning” in Robert Mannyng’s *Handlyng Synne*’, *Marginalia*

- 14 (2010–11), www.marginalia.co.uk/journal/12cambridge (accessed 30 August 2013).
- 4 K.C. Little, *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), p. 124.
- 5 Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996), ll. 42–4.
- 6 See Mannyng, *Chronicle*, ll. 41–56.
- 7 Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 143.
- 8 Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, pp. 46–7.
- 9 Rhonda Knight, ‘Stealing Stonehenge: Translation, Appropriation, and Cultural Identity’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32.1 (2002), pp. 41–58.
- 10 Pearsall, ‘The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century’, in Helen Cooney (ed.), *Nature, Court and Culture. New Essays on Fifteenth-Century Poetry* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 15–27, at p. 15.
- 11 Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative. An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 58. See also Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 249, where he distinguishes between sermons *ad status*, directed in their totality to one specific group whose duties of estate they outline, and more general sermons that contain only brief remarks about one or several such groups, usually in the form of social critique. *Handlyng Synne* falls somewhere between these types.
- 12 Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, p. 58.
- 13 *Handlyng Synne* consists of the Prologue; the Ten Commandments; the Seven Deadly Sins; Sacrilege; the Seven Sacraments; and Shrift.
- 14 ‘Mattock’ is one of a number of words that Mannyng defines for his English audience, in a small aside not found in the French original: ‘Mattok is a pykeys, / Or pyke, as sum men seys’ (ll. 941–2).
- 15 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 845–50. All quotations from Mannyng are taken from Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1983).
- 16 Fursey is invited by his angelic guide to jump in the fire and burn off his sins. He is accosted by the flaming soul of a usurer, who accuses Fursey of failing to pray for him, for which he had paid Fursey in advance. Fursey repents, though he suffers for the rest of his life from the burns on one side of his body inflicted by the usurer. Other accounts of the vision – in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Peraldus, Jacques de Vitry, and Bede (Mannyng’s source for this exemplum) – tell us that

Furse was an Irish founder and mystic who built his own monastery outside the town of Headford in Co. Galway.

- 17 In the *Chronicle*, writes Knight, 'he portrays the Irish as a rejected, underdeveloped culture that must look to the British for guidance' ('Stealing Stonehenge', p. 48). He was no fonder of the Scots; see Joyce Coleman, 'Strange Rhyme: Prosody and Nationhood in Robert Mannyng's *Story of England*', *Speculum* 78 (2003), pp. 1214–38, at pp. 1230–2.
- 18 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 2581–6. These have been identified as Knaresmyre (Cenward's Mire) in York and, possibly, the monastery at Cnobheresburgh (according to Bede), whose actual whereabouts have not been established. See Catholic Encyclopedia Online, 'St Fursey', www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3491 (accessed 30 August 2013).
- 19 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 2587–90.
- 20 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 2579–80.
- 21 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9012–18 (emphasis added).
- 22 Cölbigk, a village in the neighbourhood of Ilberstedt in today's Saxony-Anhalt.
- 23 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 9051–6.
- 24 Robert of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 119, 123 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1901–3), Vol. 2, p. 284, fn. 6. The tale is based on an old German legend, probably earlier than 1012, the date suggested by William of Malmesbury. He ascribes it to one Ethelbert (or Otbert), whom he quotes directly. William locates the occurrence in Saxony. In his version, there are two priests, Robert and John; the three women in the group die immediately upon being reconciled at the altar by the priest; several other dancers die, famed for miracles; and the rest 'betray their punishment by the trembling of their limbs' (pp. 182–3). The song has been traced back to the legend of one Dietrich (Theodoricus), who 'pretended to have been the only one of the dancers to be cured at the tomb of St Edith of Wilton in England' (pp. 182–3).
- 25 John J. Delaney, 'Magnus Erlendsson, Earl of Orkney', *Dictionary of Saints* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 373. The historical Magnus was a Norwegian nobleman renowned for the piety and pacifism he showed when he refused to disembark to fight for the King of Norway in Anglesey. He ruled as earl of Orkney jointly with his cousin, who had him killed, and was buried in Christchurch at Birsay. Among the many miraculous healings that were reported at his gravesite, one detail of his posthumous activity may be relevant to *Handlyng Synne's* carollers. When William the Old, bishop of Orkney, warned that 'it was heresy to go about with ... tales' of Magnus's miracles, he was struck blind in his Birsay cathedral. His sight was afterward restored when he prayed at Magnus's grave.

- 26 See Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, p. 242.
- 27 Thomas de Cantimpré, *De Apibus*; Odo of Cheriton; Roy.7.D.I (226); *Gesta Abbatum Mon. S. Albani*, II, 367, in Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, p. 383.
- 28 Greg. Dial., III, 15, PL 77 (249), in Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, p. 383.
- 29 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 4151–2.
- 30 Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 4157–60.
- 31 Peter Ackroyd, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (New York and London: Doubleday, 2003), p. 463.

4

Modelling holiness: self-fashioning and sanctity in late medieval English mystical literature

Jessica Barr

‘Dere lord Ihesu mercy, þat welle art of mercy, why wyl not myn herte breste and cleue in-two?’¹ So begins the shorter of Richard Rolle’s *Meditations on the Passion*, a fourteenth-century affective devotional text that describes the speaker’s imagined witnessing of Christ’s passion. Noteworthy here is the use of pronouns: while the *Meditations* is in a large sense for its audience’s spiritual benefit, the speaker’s focus is on his own emotional state; it is *his* heart that he wishes would split, so overwhelmed is he by the evidence of Jesus’ sacrifice and his own unworthiness. In a work that serves as a template for readers’ and hearers’ spiritual edification, the speaker represents himself as a particular, individual soul striving for a full emotional realisation of Christ’s love and death.

The use of a self-consciously fashioned narrative subject, a fictional ‘I’ who claims to undergo the experiences described in the text, is relatively common in late medieval English literature. It is famously evident in Chaucer’s works² and in Langland’s creation of an authorial persona in *Piers Plowman*.³ But narrative personae are also important in devotional and mystical literature, as such personae can serve a significant function in engaging the texts’ audiences in an identificatory process that enables the mystical work’s declared purpose – the turning of souls to God – to occur. They also reflect the importance of individual experience in the later Middle Ages, as, increasingly, experience could confer authority. In the context of fourteenth-century affective devotional writing, authority ‘is a potential attribute of human experience itself’, capable of emerging from significant, genuine, and powerful personal experience.⁴ In the context of mystical writings, this authority is frequently grounded in contemporary notions of sanctity.

This essay considers how the use of narrative personae in selected English mystical literature pertains to late medieval constructions of sanctity and its implications for the reader’s

devotional response to the meditations that these texts are intended to prompt. Using Rolle's *Meditations*, the *Showings* of Julian of Norwich, and *The Book of Margery Kempe*, I explore the ways in which each text's narrative persona employs individual experience to establish his or her sanctity and the strategies that the texts use to enable their audiences to follow the models of holiness that they illustrate. Where Rolle's *Meditations* is a guide to affective contemplation and suggest a narrative perspective that is capable of being inhabited by any reader, Julian and Margery are both concerned – in different ways and with very different outcomes – to create themselves as particular visionaries and authorities in terms of their personal experiences of the divine. But it is the work of all three texts both to illustrate an ideal affective response to Christ's suffering – thereby advancing the impression of the narrative persona's holiness – and to invite the reader to participate in such a response, bringing her into a closer relationship with the divine. The texts therefore straddle a divide between the personal and the general, enabling us to interrogate the efficacy of individual experience as a didactic tool in the soul's striving for union with God.

This argument is based on three premises: first, that personal experience is increasingly important in later medieval religious literature; second, that the use of personal experience often requires authors to establish narrative personae who undergo those experiences; and third, that the use of such personae is essentially a 'literary' technique in the more or less modern sense, in that it is grounded in rhetorical strategies that are always to some extent fictionalising. For the latter premise, articulating the criteria of 'literary' is not my intention here. However, the use of what we might call literary – rather than (or in addition to) theological or doctrinal – strategies in mystical literature demonstrates the relationship between imaginative literature and sanctity in the Middle Ages. Of course, the boundaries between what we would now term 'fictional' and 'non-fictional' or even 'mystical' texts are not clearly defined in the medieval period, these terms being later impositions.⁵ It is therefore appropriate to consider the ways in which one 'type' of writing may be used to illuminate the other, and how the commonalities between them enhance our understanding of medieval ideas – in this case, ideas of narrative self-invention and saintliness. The intersection between literature and sanctity is visible in these texts' use of persona and description – the use, in short, of a kind of literary imagination – to construct a

means of increasing one's own holiness and encountering, in some measure, the divine.

As for the first two premises, studies of the role of personal experience in later medieval literature indicate 'a transformation of Western religious consciousness' in the period from about 1050 to 1200 towards 'an unprecedented interest in individual experience and introspective analysis'.⁶ This transformation has been well charted. R.W. Southern describes a greater monastic interest in solitude and privacy that dates from the eleventh century; beginning with Anselm of Bec and Bernard of Clairvaux, he argues, theologians increasingly came to emphasise the role of self-knowledge and an inner search for God via an individualised, rather than corporate, movement towards sanctity.⁷ Similarly, Colin Morris has argued that the individual's imitation of Christ, not only the believer's immersion in Church sacraments, became particularly important in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸ The consequence of such changes is a heightened attention to personal experience, particularly of Christ's suffering, as instrumental to the soul's progression towards God,⁹ which is reflected in the rise of affective devotional meditation in the later Middle Ages and of devotional texts designed to aid in gospel meditation. Affective responses to such meditation thus became a major characteristic of late medieval sanctity; its importance is clear in fourteenth-century saints' lives, as Richard Kieckhefer points out: '[T]he main themes in this literature are compassionate beholding of Christ's agony and such total identification with Christ that the saint not only imitates him but becomes assimilated to him – not only becomes like Christ but becomes an embodiment of Christ himself.'¹⁰ Re-enacting the passion through meditation, by triggering both compassion for and imitation of Christ, was to move the soul closer to Christ – and to sanctity – through an active participation in his suffering.¹¹ Devotional texts such as Rolle's *Meditations* are also a means of actively participating in Christ's suffering; by embodying the abased and devout soul, Rolle creates a model of the saintly meditator for his audience to mimic, thereby pointing out a path to sanctity that relies upon the use of individual experience as a means of inviting others into a particular relationship with God.

Rolle's *Meditations* is a series of prayers and vividly visualised meditations on Christ's suffering and death told through the voice of a first-person speaker who addresses Jesus and Mary as though he were actually present at the Crucifixion. Reflections on Christ's suffering lead the speaker to condemn his own sins and express

the hope for redemption from them; thus, for example, Jesus' being 'pynd in [his] fyue wyttes' is to 'hele with oure trespass þat we þere-with han wrou3t'; the sins associated with the senses are then elucidated in general terms (e.g. 'Agaynes þe synne of owre nose-smellynges, þe smellynge of þe careynes as þou hengyd on þe rode smot in þi nose, þat was to þe ful greuows').¹² Particularly characteristic of the *Meditations* is the placement of the speaker – and thus the reader – immediately at the scene of Christ's suffering and death. It therefore contains vivid, even disturbing descriptions of his wounding, conjuring his pain before the reader's eye and emphasising its salvific function; for example:

Swete Ihesu, I þanke þe wiþ al myn herte for al þat peyne þat þou suffridist whanne þe cros was cast doun on þe grounde, & þe[i] leiden þee flat þeron ... Now, swete Ihesu, me þinkþ I se þi bodi on þe rode, al bled, and streyned þat þe ioyntis twinnen; þi woundis now openen, þe skyn al to-drawn recchiþ so brode þat merueile is it halt; þin heed crowned wiþ þornis, þi bodi al ful of woundis, nailis in þin hondis & feet so tendre, & in þi synewis, þere as is moste painful felinge.¹³

Rolle further creates a sense of the vision's immediacy by placing himself actually at the scene: 'Þus wole I lie to kepe of þi blood, swete Ihesu'.¹⁴ Presenting himself as having witnessed the Crucifixion, the speaker invites the reader into an engagement with that very scene, while also outlining the appropriate response to it.

The narrative persona whose affective devotional experiences are at the centre of the *Meditations* is both putatively generic and representative of a model response to the Gospel scene: he is penitential and reflective, giving voice to a profound awareness of the consequence of Jesus' passion. Squarely situated within fourteenth-century contemplative practices that were to enable the meditator to achieve a greater degree of holiness, Rolle's persona is ideally penitential, fully aware of his participation in the transgressions that necessitated Christ's suffering and death. He both implores God for 'grace to loue þee wiþ al my soule, wiþ al my loue, wiþ al my wil, wiþ al my lust, wiþ al my liking, wiþ al my mynde, wiþ al my wische, wiþ al my deuocioun, wiþ al my longing, wiþ amendinge of my liif wiþ al my disiryng, wiþ lastinge in goodnes, wiþ contricioun & confessioun to þee & penaunce for my synnes'¹⁵ and acknowledges 'ech man for betere þan' himself.¹⁶ Portraying himself in terms of the humility and self-abasement that are typical of late medieval hagiographic and mystical literature, he also

reflects the yearning to imitate Christ and be worthy of him that was a standard component of late medieval sanctity.

But Rolle's persona is not simply reflective of a single person's experience. At once a rhetorically specific individual reflecting on personal experience and an open 'I' inviting the reader's participation in the scene that he describes, this persona draws the reader into an idealised response to the central story of the Christian faith. It is this response that imparts sanctity to reader and speaker alike. The creation of such a voice may be considered a literary technique; Nicholas Watson, in fact, explicitly refers to Rolle's creation of a 'literary persona' that is based on the author's own devotional experiences and meditations.¹⁷ Rolle's private experiences and responses, as presented through this persona, are an inescapable component of his spiritual writings; despite the didactic work performed by the *Meditations*, this persona remains at its centre. At the same time, the exemplary attitude and behaviour of the speaker enable the reader to imaginatively inhabit a saintly perspective herself, thereby drawing her closer to an ideal relationship with God. The creation of a persona with which the reader is invited to identify is a common characteristic of later medieval affective literature. Claire McIlroy notes that it dates from the thirteenth century, when 'we are able to see the development of the role of the individual, and the practice of *imaginatio*, in vernacular religious literature, particularly in the construction of the reader as the "I" figure in the text, the meditator'. Readers of affective devotional literature are thus to 'recover' the experience of Jesus' death 'through an imaginatively dramatic engagement with the Passion narrative itself' accomplished by inhabiting the persona of the 'I' in meditation poems.¹⁸ The reader's identification with the 'I' of the text allows the meditation on Christ's passion to gain in personal meaning for her, as she sees herself as present at the scene. Rolle's 'I', then, while arguably grounded in his private emotional experience, refers beyond himself.

The meditative practice advanced by Rolle's text therefore emphasises the importance of the individual soul's encounter with the divine and an at least partially private path of spiritual development. Its play with the fiction of witnessing the Crucifixion is intended to instruct, not to document a particular individual's lived experience. In this respect, the *Meditations* resembles works like Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessyd Life of Jesu Christ*, which enjoin the reader to imagine herself at the site of Christ's crucifixion.¹⁹ However, Rolle's text is unlike the *Mirroure* in that

there are no exhortations to the reader to envision herself at the scene – indeed, the reader herself is not directly addressed at all; rather, it is through identification with the narrative persona that the reader is given the ‘experience’ of the passion narrative.

The purpose of such experience was to draw the devout soul into a fuller awareness of Christ’s suffering and, ultimately, to union with God. By focusing her attention on the wounds and suffering of Christ and imaginatively witnessing the Crucifixion, the reader is brought into closer union with the divine and implicitly sanctified by her participation in Christ’s sacrifice. Meditation on Christ’s life enables the ascent of the meditant’s soul to the divine; as Michelle Karnes argues, ‘meditations are useful precisely because they provide a path from Christ’s humanity to his divinity. The meditant who completes that journey would seem to arrive at nothing less than mystical union.’²⁰ Not simply a fascination with the physical details of Christ’s death, meditation on his suffering is a means of access to God. Affective devotional literature invites the reader into the position of the textual meditant; it situates the reader at the centre of the Christian story and establishes her as an immediate recipient of the divine love.²¹ In Rolle’s *Meditations*, such effects are founded upon the reader’s identification with the narrating ‘I’. And in order to encourage such identification, the author employs what we might term literary-fictional techniques of narrative self-creation, establishing a powerful individual voice that can be adopted by any reader. Claiming an emotional – almost, even, a literal – experience of Christ’s sacrifice, the narrator inhabits a subject position that both asserts and models Christian holiness.

Sanctity, in the *Meditations*, is thus made available to the reader through the perspective of the narrative persona. The speaker’s assertion of authority based in experience and his appropriate response to Christ’s suffering invite the reader to adopt a perspective exemplifying saintly humility and devotion. In devotional writing, then, sanctity may be shared between the narrator and his audience. In Julian of Norwich’s *Showings*, we see a similar blending of personal experience and instruction for the reader. While Julian’s narrative ‘I’ is highly personal and generalisable in a much more limited way than Rolle’s, Julian nonetheless recognises the importance of a shared devotional experience with her fellow Christians, which is reflected in a tension between personal experience and general instruction in the *Showings*. As in the *Meditations*, Julian’s rhetorical strategies convey an immediate

sense of Christ's suffering to the reader that heightens the reader's devotion and enables her to enter into a deeper relationship with the divine. But Julian blends the personal and the instructive without the implicit invitation for the reader to identify with the speaker that we see in Rolle. For Julian, the particularity of the narrative persona's experiences brings us into a relationship with the text that is more reminiscent of reading a work of fiction, wherein we vicariously observe the narrator's experiences without placing ourselves directly into the narrator's position. The fact that, in the Long Text, Julian downplays and even removes a number of particularising details that appear in the Short Text indicates her awareness of the narrative persona's individuality and its role in generating a particular response from the reader – as well as a desire to generalise that role more fully in the later redaction of her visions.

Especially in the Short Text, Julian is more concerned than Rolle to develop a particularised narrative persona – not by providing details of her life (Julian's pre-anchoritic past is famously murky), but by focusing on her own experiences and responses.²² The Short Text, in fact, begins with the word 'I', immediately calling attention to Julian's subjectivity: 'I desirede thre graces be the gifte of God'.²³ These three desired graces are premised on Julian's particular spiritual state; justifying her wishes, she writes, 'methought I hadde grete felinge in the passion of Criste, botte yitte I desirede to have mare, be the grace of God'.²⁴ A 'text about self-textualization',²⁵ the *Showings* begins with a clear sense of Julian's narrative persona, even as that persona becomes subordinated to her meditation on the visions later in her work. The immediate foregrounding of Julian's spiritual state, her experiences, and her wish for a stronger feeling of Christ's passion underscores the importance both of her individuality and of individual experience itself in late medieval affective devotion, in which the imaginative confrontation with Christ's suffering is to act upon the individual soul. Importantly, however, through the textual encounter with Julian's visionary experience, readers can benefit from her increase in devotion. The reader's response remains vital, but it is via Julian's experience that we are invited into a participatory vision of Christ's redeeming death.

While Julian's authority to write comes from her visions, these visions simultaneously erase Julian and leave the reader unimpeded access to the divine benefits that they impart. In an oft-cited passage, she writes:

Botte God forbede that ye shulde saye or take it so that I am a techere. For I meene it nought so, no I mente nevere so. For I am a woman, lewed, febille, and freylle. Botte I wate wele, this that I saye I hafe it of the shewing of him that es soverayne techare. Botte sothelye charite stirres me to telle yowe it. For I wolde God ware knawen and min even christene spede, as I wolde be myself, to the mare hatinge of sinne and loving of God. Botte for I am a woman shulde I therfore leve that I shulde nought telle yowe the goodenes of God, sine that I sawe in that same time that it is his wille that it be knawen? And that shalle ye welle see in the same matere that folowes it after, if itte be welle and trewelye taken.²⁶

Here, as has frequently been observed, Julian accounts for her writing despite the prohibitions against teaching and preaching normally imposed on her sex. She is not a teacher; she is only an unlettered woman; but she is moved to impart the lessons of the 'sovereign teacher' that she has received for the benefit of others. She thus asserts the virtue of her desire and implicitly refutes charges of vainglory or other inappropriate motives for writing. But the sentence following this passage is equally significant: 'Thanne shalle ye sone forgette me that am a wreche, and dose so that I lette yowe nought, and behalde Jhesu that is techare of alle'.²⁷ By reaping the benefit of her text, we will *see through* Julian to Christ, surpassing the mediating influence of her narrative persona (and actual/authorial self) in order to come directly into contact with the lessons that her visions impart. Yet this self-erasure seems self-contradictory, as it is by virtue of her individual experience and her relation of that experience that we are to gain access to Christ's words and to 'forget' her presence.

The relationship between individual experience and the common good of her readership and 'even Christians' is developed throughout sections 6 and 7 of the Short Text, as Julian repeatedly highlights the unity of all Christians. Her visions 'shulde be to everilke manne the same profite that I desirede to myselfe ... for it is comon and generale, as we ar alle ane ... For if I loke singularlye to myselfe, I am right nought. Botte in generale, I am in anehede of charite with alle mine evencristende'.²⁸ The visions are 'shewed in generale and nathing in specielle', she notes,²⁹ yet it is through her individual experience that the common profit of the revelations is realised. The *Showings* thus articulates a productive tension between individuality and the common good: whereas Rolle's *Meditations* could be said to fictionalise Scripture in order to enable the reader to imaginatively access Christ's death and the spiritual

profit of affective meditation, Julian's visions come through a single person in order to enable the community of Christians to benefit from her experiences. Her particular narrative persona's experience is necessary, in other words, in order that it may be erased and thus rendered sanctifying for a much larger community. The value of this experiential vision comes from the response of the individual soul as a member of the greater body of Christians, and Julian's intention can only be fulfilled through the visions' textualisation. Julian's purpose, notes Robert Wright, is 'imaginatively to communicate the revelation itself to her "evyn christens", that they might be moved with her to greater love of God. The experience of the showings – hers mystical, theirs literary – does not alone suffice'.³⁰ The audience's movement towards God – towards sanctity – is the purpose of the revelations, and even the revelations that seem personally directed are intended for a broader audience; when Christ says to Julian, 'Thow shalle nought be overcomen', for instance, the words are not meant for her alone: 'And this lerninge and this trewe comforth, it es generale to alle mine evencristen, as I haffe before saide, and so is Goddes wille.'³¹ The individual experience undergone by the narrative persona merges into universal applicability. Communicating a personal response to the revelations as a part of the great union of Christians, which depends upon the articulation of her individual experience via a particular narrative persona, is therefore one aim of the Short Text.

The tension between individuality and generality shifts, however, in the Long Text, in which the particularity of Julian's experience is muted.³² Denise Baker points out that the Long Text adds 'discursive analysis' to the 'relatively straightforward account of her visionary experience' contained in the Short;³³ the addition of extensive interpretive passages, as well as of whole revelations not noted in the Short Text, deflects attention away from Julian herself and onto the spiritually edifying content of her visions and reflections. Barry Windeatt explains the change as a diminishing in self-consciousness from the Short Text to the Long: in the Short Text, 'Julian tends to be more conscious of herself and of her own position', whereas, in the Long Text, 'the sense of self is comparatively reduced ... [in a] move towards a more universalist position'.³⁴ As I have argued, the Short Text does not neglect the universal; Julian's reminders that her visions are intended for all Christians are essential. However, the Long Text's downplaying of her particular responses to the revelations foregrounds the text's potential benefit to the audience. Our attention is more fully drawn

to the spiritual profit and meditative effects of the visions than to Julian's experiential response.

The relationship of Julian's text to concepts of sanctity is, perhaps, less overt than is the articulation of a narrative persona. Julian's aim does not seem to be self-promotion; nor does the *Showings* offer a guide to readers' self-improvement and deepening devotion to God, as Love's *Mirroure* or Rolle's *Meditations* do. However, the *Showings* illustrates the powerful affective response to the events of Christ's suffering and death and the awareness of one's own unworthiness that are characteristic of Christian sanctity in late medieval England. Further, Julian's Short Text frequently asserts the orthodoxy of its narrator – another attribute of medieval sanctity. Noting more than once that her revelations do not conflict with the teachings of the Church – e.g. 'For oure lorde ... hase lefte me to haly kyrke; and I ... wilfully submittes me to the techinge of haly kyrke',³⁵ and 'I tuke tha that oure lorde hadde shewed me ... with alle the faith of haly kyrke – for I holde it as bathe ane'³⁶ – Julian partly grounds her visionary authority in the sanctioned authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, an attitude that is a conventional feature of medieval holiness.³⁷ The *Showings*, therefore, invites its readers into a devotional experience that is intended for the benefit of all Christians but that depends, crucially, upon the mediation of a specific, individualised experience – an experience undergone by the author and represented through her persona, who models a largely ideal response to the divine revelations themselves.

This way of reading a visionary text suggests one explanation for the peculiar status of *The Book of Margery Kempe* as a work of mystical literature. As Rosalynn Voaden has argued, Kempe's *Book* imperfectly employs some of the methods of legitimising hagiographic and visionary literature current in the later Middle Ages. Concentrating on the discourse of *discretio spirituum*, Voaden points out that Kempe's incomplete adherence to this discourse results in a text that does not effectively represent its protagonist as a saint or even a credible visionary.³⁸ I would add that the emphatic particularisation of its narrator – the centrality of her experience and the difficulty of a reader's coming to inhabit that narrative position – may be accountable for the common view of the *Book* as an autobiography rather than (or in addition to) a mystical or visionary treatise. The 'I' (or, rather, the 'Margery') of the *Book* is too much like a character for the text to have a performative devotional effect. Instead, it becomes a story: the story of a single individual's quest for divine union and the difficulties that she

encounters as a result of that quest's irreconcilability with worldly aims and concerns.

The use of a narrative persona in the *Book* has been explored in depth by Lynn Staley, who, in *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions*, suggests that Kempe creates Margery as a fictionalised persona, strategically constructing a 'self' that can claim authority while also presenting a critique of the contemporary Church. Terming Kempe's method of 'authorial fashioning' a 'strategy of dissent', Staley links her claims to privileged subjectivity and authority to her presumed holiness and the process through which her book came to be written.³⁹ Authorial self-fashioning thus provides Kempe with a means of establishing a persona through which she can critique the institutional and ecclesiastical structures of her day. But the creation of such a fully articulated subjective presence limits the utility of the *Book* as a devotional tool for others. This is not to say that the *Book* is 'flawed', but rather that it serves a function distinct from Rolle's *Meditations* or Julian's *Showings*. In fact, Kempe's text is aimed less at providing a devotional manual for readers – a perspective for the reader to imaginatively inhabit – than at providing a means of critiquing Kempe's social and ecclesiastical world.⁴⁰ Scholars have also argued that the *Book* is intended to establish Kempe's position as a holy woman, a strategy that further entails elaborate strategies of self-authorisation.⁴¹ The construction of a well-developed narrative persona advances all of these possible textual goals and enables Kempe to promote a model of individual holiness in conflict with contemporary mores.

Throughout the *Book*, Margery's individual actions and reactions are highlighted and form the primary focus of the text. Chapter after chapter follow her movements through the Christian world, both in her home town and on her many pilgrimages, documenting her encounters with clerics, fellow pilgrims, and others, as well as her visions of Christ, Mary, the saints, and the Godhead. Despite this focus on Margery's experiences, however, the *Book* shares with Rolle's *Meditations* and Julian's *Showings* an interest in the spiritual development of its readers. The first sentences of the *Book* express this intent:

Here begynnyth a schort tretys and a comfortabyl for synful wrecchys, wher-in þei may haue gret solas and comfort to hem and vndyrstondyn þe hy & vnspecabyl mercy of ower souereyn Sauyowr Cryst Ihesu ... Alle þe werkys of ower Saviowr ben for ower exampyl

& instruccyon, and what grace þat he werkyth in any creatur is ower profyth yf lak of charyte be not ower hynderawne.⁴²

And when the Lord orders Margery to write, ‘he comawnded hyr & chargyd hir þat sche xuld don wryten hyr felyngys & reuelacyons & þe forme of her leuyng þat hys goodnesse myth be knowyn to alle þe world’.⁴³ As is conventional in visionary and hagiographic literature, the stated intent of the text is the recognition of the divine power and presence in the world. The reader is enjoined to read God’s works through Margery’s experiences, to use Margery’s life as a window onto the divine.

But compared to Julian’s remarks on the reader’s relationship to her revelations, and when balanced against the weight given to Margery’s individual experiences in the text, these are brief – even cursory – instructions. God’s goodness will be known, but we are not invited to step into Margery’s position and experience or interpret his revelations in the way that Julian calls us to do. The fact that ‘þe forme of her leuyng’ is also to be made known foregrounds Margery herself alongside the divine revelations. Whereas Julian shifts between individualisation and generalisation, emphasising the importance of her revelations’ universality, Margery has little explicit interest in the generalisability of her experiences. Kempe’s hyper-particularised persona arguably limits the *Book* as a devotional narrative; it maintains a focus on the person of Margery that precludes the reader’s easy adoption of her perspective. It is not, perhaps, insignificant that the *Book* is written in the third person, rather than in the (more readily inhabitable?) ‘I’ of the *Meditations* and the *Showings*. Throughout, ‘this creature’ is called to our attention as an exception to the conventional religiosity of her day, struggling against the limits imposed upon her by those who have *not* had the kind of experiential, affective contact with Christ that her visions have accorded her – and that could, perhaps, be realised through the kind of meditation promoted by Rolle and Julian.

The persona of Margery Kempe is in some ways the most ‘literary’ of the three explored here. Like Geffrey or Long Will, she is imperfect and struggling, seeking to articulate a vision of the world that she does not always fully understand. As Staley’s provocative title suggests, the *Book* can be read as a *fiction* – a literary work designed to elicit a particular response in the reader, a degree of sympathy for the narrator, and a critical attitude towards her opponents. Unlike the more clearly devotional writings of Julian and Rolle, the *Book* does not map out a route to sanctity for the reader.

But what these three texts share is a strategy of modelling sanctity via a central narrative persona, whether that persona be a specific individual (Margery), an individual inviting the reader to participate in her experiences (Julian), or an every-Christian embodying the appropriate response to Christ's suffering (Rolle).

These texts illustrate three ways in which the mystical writer could use a narrative voice to engage with and create a model of a saintly persona. A central issue for each text has been its strategies for incorporating the reader and inviting her into a greater degree of devotion. As I have argued, the degree to which the narrative persona is particularised affects the extent to which the perspective adopted in the text is open to being inhabited by the reader. This is in some ways a fairly obvious point, but it is helpful to consider the use of such an essentially fictionalising rhetorical strategy in the advancement of a decidedly 'non-fictional' agenda. Importantly, examining strategies of self-fashioning sheds light on the productive tension between the particular 'I' of the mystical text and the universal Christian who is to benefit from it. For works that claim to be written for the profit of all, this is essential. It is in the creation of the narrative persona, which the reader both inhabits and observes, that individual experience and universal instruction are fused and from which affective texts such as these derive their power.

Notes

- 1 Carl Horstmann (ed.), 'Richard Rolle's *Meditatio de Passione Domini*,' in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard of Hampole, An English Father of the Church and His Followers* (New York: Macmillan, 1895), p. 84.
- 2 See Geoffrey W. Gust, *Constructing Chaucer: Author and Autofiction in the Critical Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and Marianne Borch, 'Poet & Persona: Writing the Reader in *Troilus*,' *Chaucer Review* 30.3 (1996), pp. 215–28.
- 3 On the issue of Langland's self-naming, see Anne Middleton, 'William Langland's "Kynde Name": Authorial Signature and Social Identity in Late Fourteenth-Century England', in Lee Patterson (ed.), *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 15–82.
- 4 Nicholas Watson, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 22.
- 5 I discuss this issue in Barr, *Willing to Know God: Dreamers and Visionaries of the Later Middle Ages* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2010), pp. 3–6. See also Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages*

- (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 19–26. For a consideration of the problems with applying the term ‘mystical’ to medieval literature, see Nicholas Watson, ‘Introduction’, in Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 1–27.
- 6 Julian of Norwich, *Showings: From Vision to Book*, ed. Denise Nowakowski Baker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 16.
 - 7 R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 225–9.
 - 8 Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 144.
 - 9 See also Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
 - 10 Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 91.
 - 11 Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, p. 105.
 - 12 Horstmann, ‘Richard Rolle’, p. 87.
 - 13 Horstmann, ‘Richard Rolle’, pp. 99–100.
 - 14 Horstmann, ‘Richard Rolle’, p. 102.
 - 15 Horstmann, ‘Richard Rolle’, p. 92.
 - 16 Horstmann, ‘Richard Rolle’, p. 95.
 - 17 Watson, *Richard Rolle*, p. 6.
 - 18 Claire Elizabeth McIlroy, *The English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 42–3. Michelle Karnes more fully discusses the development of medieval gospel meditations in *Imagination, Meditation, & Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 111–26.
 - 19 The *Mirroure* contains a number of words and phrases designed to situate the reader at the site of Christ’s death or even in the position of Christ himself, as Sarah Beckwith points out in *Christ’s Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 66.
 - 20 Karnes, *Imagination*, p. 112. Karnes is specifically discussing Bonaventure’s gospel meditations, but her formulation applies to many such texts.
 - 21 McIlroy, *Prose Treatises*, p. 48.
 - 22 Her particularity is apparent, for instance, in Section 2 of the Short Text, which describes the illness that led to her visions and her response to the idea that she might die. ‘Ande when I was thritty wintere alde and a halfe, God sente me a bodelye sykenes ... and on the ferthe night I toke alle my rightinges of haly kyrke, and wened nought tille have

liffede tille daye ... Botte in this I was right sarye and lothe thought for to die, botte for nothinge that was in erthe that me likede to lyeve fore, nor for nothinge that I was aferde fore, for I trusted in God. Botte it was fore I walde hafe lyevede to have lovede God better and langere time': Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (eds), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2006), ST, 2.1–9.

- 23 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 1.1.
- 24 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 1.4–5.
- 25 Felicity Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', in Ann M. Hutchinson (ed.), *Editing Women: The Thirty-First Annual Conference on Editorial Problems* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 101–24, at p. 103.
- 26 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 6.35–43.
- 27 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 6.44–5.
- 28 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 6.13–15, 19–20.
- 29 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 7.10–11.
- 30 Robert E. Wright, 'The "Boke Performyd": Affective Technique and Reader Response in the *Showings* of Julian of Norwich', *Christianity and Literature* 36.4 (1987), pp. 13–32, at p. 16.
- 31 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST 22.28–9.
- 32 Barry Windeatt attributes these changes to a shift in focus from the Short to the Long Text. 'After long years of meditation on the content of the revelations the mystic herself considers these original circumstantial details less relevant to what she has to say,' he contends in Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich and Her Audience', *Review of English Studies* 28.109 (1977), pp. 1–17, at p. 1. Windeatt details several examples of a shift from a straightforward narrative account of the events of her revelations to a version whose emphasis is upon the 'spiritual results' of her experiences (p. 2).
- 33 Baker, *Julian of Norwich*, p. 139.
- 34 Windeatt, 'Julian of Norwich', p. 3.
- 35 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 13.41–3.
- 36 Julian of Norwich, *Writings*, ST, 21.32–3.
- 37 Such passages do not appear in the Long Text. Windeatt associates the reduced mention of personal experience in the Long Text with a more relaxed attitude towards the assertion of her visions' authority (pp. 3–5).
- 38 Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1999), p. 110.
- 39 Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1994), p. 11.
- 40 Catherine Sanok suggests that Kempe uses hagiography in an unusual way in order to expose her period's inhospitality to laywomen's

devotional practice. 'Refusing to read and imitate hagiographic narrative through the filters of contemporary devotional discourses and secular gender ideology', Sanok writes, 'Margery demonstrates the considerable distance between the ethical paradigm of traditional legends and late medieval expectations for laywomen's religious and social practice'; see *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 123.

- 41 Numerous scholars have explored the self-authorising aims of the *Book*. Wendy Harding, for instance, links its composition to the establishment of Kempe as a holy woman capable of speaking authoritatively on spiritual matters. Arguing that the scribe of the *Book* inscribes Margery into particular recognisable narrative frames, establishing her, for example, as 'an example of the worldly woman redeemed', Harding observes that this insertion of Margery into established patterns of discourse gives her voice textual authority: see Wendy Harding, 'Body into Text: *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in Sarah Stanbury and Linda Lomperis (eds), *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 168–87, at p. 171. See also Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004) and Lynn Staley, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum* 66.4 (1991), pp. 820–38.
- 42 Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, eds Stanford Brown Meech and Hope Emily Allen, EETS 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961 [1940]), p. 1.
- 43 Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp. 3–4.

5

Body and soul: from doctrine to debate in medieval Welsh and Irish literature

Helen Fulton

In the Middle English poem attributed to John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, translated from the French poem by Guillaume de Deguileville, the allegorical figure of Grace Dieu, hoping to guide the Pilgrim safely on his journey to salvation, describes the relationship between the body and the soul. Addressing the Pilgrim's soul, the seat of his intellect and cognition, Grace Dieu tells him that he must fight 'lyk a myghty champyoun' against the 'deceyt & flaterye' of the body who will otherwise lead him to damnation.¹

To illustrate her point that the body and soul are separate entities which must divide at death, Grace Dieu performs a little experiment in which she lifts the Pilgrim's soul out of his body and he experiences a delightful sense of floating up in the air, free of his body, which only makes him dread the moment of reunification:

Al was wel, to my plesaunce,
Save a maner dysplesaunce
I hadde off O thyng, in certeyn,
That I muste go dwelle ageyn
Wyth-Inne my body, wych that lay
Lyk an hevy lompe off clay;
Wych to me was no forthryng,
But perturbaunce, & gret lettyng,
Thyder to resorte off newe.²

The medieval doctrine of the separation of body and soul was a product of belief in resurrection after death.³ At the moment of death, the body was left to rot in the grave while the soul had to face judgement: weighed in the scales, it was destined either for hell among the damned or to join the heavenly host of the saved. If the soul was not fully cleansed of all sin, it could be taken to

purgatory where, if enough of the living prayed for its redemption, along with the intercession of Mary and the saints, it might then be sufficiently decontaminated to be allowed into heaven. The medieval industry in prayers and masses for the dead, the building of chantries and lighting of candles, was dedicated to retrieving souls from purgatory and ensuring salvation for those whose path to heaven was not quite as clear as it might have been.⁴

The didactic genre of the debate between body and soul at the point of death dramatises this moment of transition from the mortal world to the next world, that moment when sanctity, the purification achieved by suffering, might be possible.⁵ In showing the soul's difficulty in achieving heaven, the genre occupies itself with the imperfections of the earthly body and implies that sanctity is only for the very few. Based on the perception of a fundamental binary opposition between the flesh and the spirit, as preached in the New Testament and discussed by early Church authorities, the debate form appears in early Greek and Hebrew texts before emerging into other vernacular and Latin versions. A tenth-century Anglo-Saxon poem from the *Vercelli Book*, known as 'The Soul's Greeting to the Body' (or 'Soul and Body I') is an early example of the genre in England, in which the soul addresses the body but the body is not given any right of reply.⁶ This format is also found in some Middle English short poems from the thirteenth century, where the body silently accepts the words of the soul.⁷

Two longer poems in Middle English follow the Latin format of the debate in which speeches are assigned to both the body and the soul. One of these poems, 'In a þestri stude' ('In a dark room'), has a literary opening similar to that of *The Owl and the Nightingale* and is noticeably less sermon-like than the single-voiced poems.⁸ The late thirteenth-century poem, 'Als i lay in a winteris nyt' ('As I lay on a winter's night', also known by the title 'Desputisoun bitwen the Bodi and the Soule'), gives a longer and more popularised treatment of the debate, appealing to the listener's emotions to encourage empathy and identification with the dilemma of the fallen body berated by the soul whose fate depends on the life lived by the body. In the 'Desputisoun', described by Rosemary Woolf as 'by far the most brilliant of medieval Body and Soul poems in any language', the Body retorts that it is the Soul which has the will to suppress the unholy desires of the flesh, and it is not the Body's fault if the Soul now finds itself doomed to hell.⁹

These vernacular poems in English characterised a growing

movement towards popular piety in the thirteenth century, when clerics and priests tried to make doctrine accessible and relevant to their congregations through this kind of performative dialogue in which the body represented the human fear of death and the soul yearned for a saintly life without sin. The Latin poems on which the two Middle English versions were based are 'Noctis sub silentio tempore brumali' ('In the silence of the night at the time of the winter solstice', sometimes called by the title 'Dialogus inter Corpus et Animam', 'Dialogue between Body and Soul') and 'Nuper huiuscemodi visionem somnii' ('Not long ago I had a dream vision of such a kind'), both twelfth-century debate poems which are set in a dream vision framework.¹⁰ The 'Dialogus' in particular (ascribed in some manuscripts to Robert Grosseteste [d. 1253], bishop of Lincoln), seems to have been the main source of the Middle English 'Desputisoun' and also of a number of other vernacular versions in French, German, Spanish, Italian, and Danish among others.¹¹

Ireland and Wales produced their own vernacular versions of the body and soul debate from the twelfth century, and possibly earlier, drawing on a strong engagement with Latin learning embedded in the monasteries and abbeys.¹² If the genre in general shares features with both debate and vision literature, the Irish literary tradition tends to bring it closer to vision writing, while the Welsh tradition foregrounds the format of the debate. Both, however, instruct the reader or listener that sanctity is achieved only through the suffering of the mortal body, a necessary martyrdom of the flesh that prepares the soul for heaven.

Among the rich strands of ecclesiastical writing in Irish, dating from the ninth century at least, much of it adapted from Latin sources or models, we find a striking example of the doctrinal debate between body and soul, one which has no surviving source but is almost certainly based on a Latin original.¹³ The Irish manuscript known as *Leabhar Breac* (literally, 'speckled book', referring to its original leather binding) was compiled in the first decade of the fifteenth century and contains a wealth of doctrinal, biblical, hagiographical, and homiletic material.¹⁴ One of the homilies is in the form of a debate, or rather a heated argument, between the soul trying to escape from the hated body towards sanctity, and the maligned body who answers back to the soul. The homily starts with the theme of how difficult it is for a mortal soul to reach heaven. At the moment of death, when the soul leaves the body, it is met by two hosts, one angelic and one demonic, and the latter

berates the soul while it is still in the body, condemning its pride and worldliness and threatening dreadful torments. Then the soul tries to escape from the body, first through the mouth, then the nose, the ears, and finally through the crown of the head, where it is again berated and abused by the demons until it repents.¹⁵ But as soon as the soul tries to reach heaven, the demons turn it back, denouncing the soul for its wickedness.

At this point, the soul turns on the body, accusing it bitterly of being in league with the devil. A long catalogue of the body's wickedness pours forth from the furious soul:

A choland chruaid, a thempuil diabuil, a tégdais dub dorch
dona diabolda, a thopur brén, a chuli chrum, a chiste comthinoil
cech pheccaid ... Ní bia do m'fhuirech-sa anosa mar-oen frit, ol in animm
fris-in corp, acht bec bet oc tuba h'uilec [ocus] t'anchredim [ocus] do
pheccaid i t'agaid.¹⁶

Oh stubborn body, temple of the devil, dark, black home of the demons, well of decay, storehouse of worms, chest for the collection of all sins ... I will not be staying much longer with you now (says the soul to the body), only long enough to cast your evil and your unbelief and your sin in your face.

The body replies with a similar torrent of abuse and condemnation, concluding that it is the fault of the evil soul that the body has now fallen into the clutches of the devil, to face unending torment. As the soul finally parts from the body, the body sends it on its way with a graphic account of the hellish tortures to be endured – red-hot stones and spits, pointed swords, terrible beasts, barren mountains, the desperate cries of the damned. But, like martyred saints, the righteous souls are saved, as the homilist reminds us in a concluding section in which the joys of the heavenly host, come to collect the good souls, are contrasted against the fiendish tortures of the demonic army.

The earliest example of the theme in Welsh poetry is found in the the oldest manuscript collection of Welsh literature, *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* ('Black Book of Carmarthen'), dated to c. 1250. Situated among prophetic, mystical, and legendary poetry, including some of the earliest Myrddin (Merlin) poems, 'Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid' ('Debate of the Body and Soul') can be dated to the twelfth century at the latest.¹⁷ The poem begins with an introductory invocation to God and the Trinity and a priestly warning to the dying that the soul seeks escape. Then the soul addresses the body, telling it that it must be buried and accusing it of having earthly appetites

which have contaminated the soul. But the body claims it was harmless when it was created from the soil of the earth, and refers to its deliverance from the grave when the resurrection happens. The soul has the last word, describing ‘y tri llu’, ‘the three hosts’ of the dead: the holy saints who go straight to heaven, those who are damned and go to hell along with the devils, and those who are ‘brithion’, literally ‘speckled’, or a mixture of good and bad (132–41).¹⁸

There are two further versions of the body and soul debate in Welsh that date from the fourteenth century or earlier, both unfinished. In the first, the body is again described as innocent and defenceless without the soul, and the two are described as ‘[g]ogonet gedymdeith’, ‘companions in glory’.¹⁹ In the second poem, however, the body is reproached by the soul who utters a long lament on the theme of *ubi sunt*:

A druan ddyn ddeuryw anian,
Bydd vynyth dy gyssul, na vydd gyssan.
Mae a vegeist,
Mae a gereist,
Mae a weleist
O lewder yng gran?
Y mywn gweryt,
Na vydd hyuryt,
Hir ddigassant ...
Heb dy, heb dan,
Heb gerdd ddiddan
Heb welet neb
Or a welsan ...
Och! mae'r korff mawr?
Mae yn y llawr
Yn lle truan.
Och or ymliw
Yssydd heddiw,
Eilwydd yngran,
Rwng yr eneit
Ar korff diryeit
Yssydd yn korran.²⁰

Oh wretched man with two kinds of nature, your atonement will be often, there will be no more kissing. Where are those you reared, where are those you loved, where are those you saw with troubled courage? In the grave, it is not pleasant, they will hate it for a long time ... Without house, without fire, without comforting song, without seeing anyone of those whom they once saw ... Alas, where

is the great body? It is in the ground, in a wretched place. Alas for the rebuke that there is today, a troubling tryst between the soul and the ill-fated body which is in pain.

As well as these poems, there are two Welsh prose versions of the debate from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, based on the Latin 'Dialogus'. The first of these Welsh prose texts is described as 'Ymryson', or 'debate', and is a paraphrase of the first half of the 'Dialogus'; the second, described as 'Ymddiddan', or 'conversation', is a paraphrase of the second half of the 'Dialogus'.²¹ Together, then, these two prose adaptations in Welsh provide something like a complete version of the Latin poem, though they were clearly composed separately as two different poems, with some sections in common and considerable abbreviation of the Latin. Following their Latin source, the Welsh prose versions are strongly critical of the body, whose misdeeds and false pride have prevented the soul from seeking salvation through leading a saintly life. The debate begins straight away with the soul's reproach to the body:

Seganai yr enaid wrth y corph dan ubain a griddfan, 'A, y corph truan, diddelw, poenedic, hagyardlawd, a'r diystyrbryd, gogof y camweithredoedd a'r pholineb, phynnon y ddryc fuchedd a cham falchder, drwg o beth i'th ddysgwyd pann fuost ynn y byd. Pani wyddost di, druan, yr awr honn, fod y byd dan dy lywodraeth di ddoe? Panid oedd yr holl wlad yn ufuddhau ytti ddoe? ... Yr wyt di heddiw mewn pwll priddlyd kyfyngwaith, a dayardor wedi ei syrthiaw arnat.'²²

Whispered the soul to the body with wailing and groaning, 'Oh, wretched body, shapeless, tormented, hideous and poor, a contemptible form, cave of misdeeds and folly, well-spring of the evil life and false pride, so much evil was taught to you when you were in the world. Do you not know, wretch, at this moment, that the world was under your sway yesterday? Did not the whole country obey you yesterday? ... Today you are in a narrow earthy pit, and a landslide has fallen on you.'

The body speaks only to admit his sins and ask for the soul's help, which precipitates another harangue from the soul, who accuses the body of pushing all the blame on to him. According to the soul, the body had the advantage of five senses to help him detect and ward off sin, whereas the soul has none, and although he can warn the body to avoid sin, he cannot prevent him from sinning. The soul, inevitably, has the last word, claiming that he will not be

chastised on the day of judgement but will ask God to be the true judge between them.²³

The other Welsh prose version, the 'Ymddiddan', begins in mid-debate, as if an earlier piece has been lost. It picks up from line 138 in the Latin 'Dialogus', where the soul asks the body why he speaks to the soul in such bitter words, and why he wants to cast blame on the soul. Once again, the soul heaps reproaches on the body, calling it *dryan gnawt*, 'wretched flesh', and saying that he wants to punish and tame the body because it cannot give up the treachery of the world. The body admits that he enjoyed earthly possessions, that he built himself castles and ruled over the people, but now he is in the grave. The soul reminds the body that God gave him life and understanding and senses in order to resist the evil things of the world, but this he failed to do. The body asks the soul if he has ever been in hell, and what it is like there, and the soul replies:

Pwy bynac a el y yffern vnwayth nyt does gobayth vyth yddaw
o drigaredd nac o ddyvot o ddyno vyth petfei holl grevyddwyr y
byd a weddyent ac a ddyrwestynt drostaw; a phe bay holl ddynyon
kyvyawn y byt a yryolnt a phe y bey yr holl vyd yn rhoddy a
allen vwyaf dros enait a vai yn yffern ny ryddhait vyth o ddyno
erddynt.²⁴

Whoever goes once to hell, there is no hope for him ever of mercy or of ever coming back from there, even if all the believers in the world prayed and abstained for him, and even if all the righteous men of the world interceded, and even if the whole world gave the most that they could for a soul who was in hell, despite them he would never be released from there.

From these dialogues in Irish and Welsh, we can see the didactic and doctrinal function of the debates between body and soul. They were an opportunity to instruct a largely unlearned population in the nature of worldly sin, the necessity of leading a good life, the relationship between the flesh and the spirit, and the penalties for failing to adhere to the teachings of the Church.²⁵ Influenced by Latin scholastic poetry and vernacular traditions of debate poetry, the genre of the dialogue of body and soul flourished beyond its religious and homiletic boundaries and into the world of secular literature, sometimes taking on a metaphorical function in order to explore the nature of humanity.

In medieval Ireland, the theme of body and soul, as a religious and penitential motif, made its way into secular literature designed

to instruct as well as to entertain. The folktale, *Días macclerech* ('The Two Clerics'), found in the twelfth-century *Book of Leinster*, tells a minatory story about a soul which leaves its body prematurely, before the body is actually dead. A fellow scholar, previously deceased, appears to the newly-liberated soul and encourages it to go back to its body. The soul is horrified and fearful but does as it is told; reunited, the body and soul live together for another year, praying to be saved from hell.²⁶ The famous court poet Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh (d. 1244) composed two poems on the theme of the soul riding the body as a horse, in which the soul berates his 'horse' as unruly and uncontrollable, needing a strong bridle to govern its dangerous self-indulgence.²⁷ Some of the early Irish 'voyage' tales (*immrama*), in which travellers set out to sea and are granted visions of another world resembling a kind of paradise, can be read as the soul's journey from the body in search of the afterlife.²⁸

One of the most striking re-uses of the body and soul theme occurs in a well-known Irish vision tale, *Fís Adamnáin* ('The Vision of Adamnán'), found in the twelfth-century *Lebor na hUidre* ('Book of the Dun Cow'), and also in the *Leabhar Breac*.²⁹ In this tenth-century prose text, Adamnán, the seventh-century saint of Iona, is received by angels on his death and, as a measure of his sanctity, is taken on a guided tour, first of the various lands of heaven and then of the dreadful regions of hell where guilty souls suffer endless torments. Clearly intended as an instructive message to the faithful to prepare their souls for death, and to pray for heaven rather than hell, the text begins at the liminal moment when Adamnán's soul leaves his body, on the festival of John the Baptist, and floats off in the company of the angel who had been Adamnán's guardian in life. The saint's visit to both heaven and hell shows clearly the stark dichotomy of outcomes after death and suggests the model of sanctity that guarantees salvation.

The vision of Adamnán can be compared to the twelfth-century *Visio Tnugdali* ('Vision of Tnúthgal'), written in Regensburg by an Irish monk.³⁰ In his three-day vision, Tnúthgal is separated from his body by an angel guide and taken through the terrible torments of hell before being allowed a vision of heaven. Having tried at the beginning to get back inside his body, Tnúthgal ends the dream by being reluctant, like Lydgate in his later poem, to rejoin such an object of loathing. Throughout the story, narrated by the monk 'Marcus' (who identifies himself in the prologue), the body is the location of all that is most monstrous about the human condition, including its inherent sinfulness, and it is the body which is

responsible for what happens to the soul after death. Suppression of bodily desire, and more than that, bodily functions including digestion (source of some of the tale's most lurid images), is the only route to sanctity: in heaven, Tnúthgal meets the saints who achieved martyrdom by denying the degrading demands of the body and committed themselves entirely to God:

These [said the guiding angel] are the chaste who, having paid the debt of the flesh for some time, have spent the rest of their lives in God's service, whether by suffering martyrdom for Christ or by crucifying their flesh, with its passions and desires, and leading sober, righteous and godly lives: this is why they merit possession of the crown of triumph.³¹

In Wales, the theme of body and soul was incorporated from religious verse into the secular tradition of court poetry which developed after the Edwardian conquest of north Wales in 1282. Following the loss of Welsh sovereignty – and the loss of the native aristocracy – poets were forced to reconfigure their role and function to appeal to a new kind of patron, the *uchelwyr*, or gentry. The elaborate eulogies and elegies to noble families which characterised the pre-1282 poetry of the princes were simplified to meet the expectations of local landowners and senior churchmen, while new styles of lyric poetry, ranging from political and religious poetry to poems on nature, love, and humorous *fabliau*-style mishaps, were crafted to suit particular occasions. Religious and latinate themes were appropriated into the new lyric mode and made to serve a more generalist purpose. It is in the heyday of this emergent court poetry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that we find the debate of the body and soul adapted to the preoccupations of a new social order.

One of the most famous and striking re-uses of the theme occurs in a poem by Iolo Goch, who composed political and praise poetry in the second half of the fourteenth century.³² Structured as *ymddiddan*, a 'conversation' between body and soul, the poem is a humorous secularised parody of the more didactic and macabre Welsh prose versions of the previous century. The 'body' is the drunken poet, incapable of movement, while the 'soul' is the wandering spirit of the poet who undertakes the poetic circuit on the body's behalf. As in the religious genre, the soul castigates the body for its self-indulgence, comparing its indolence unfavourably with the soul's diligent attention to the business of selling poetry:

Ymddiddan, bwhwman hwyr,
A wnaeth yr enaid neithiwy

Â'r corff oedd yn caru ffug,
 Cyffes eres a orug;
 Meddai'r enaid, rhaid rhadlawn,
 'Mae ydd wyd, y corff meddw iawn?'
 'Beth?' heb y corff anorffen,
 Ehud bywll, o hyd ei ben,
 'Pa ddrwg, orhëwg, er hyn,
 Pa gyfaillt, pwy a'i gofyn?' ...

[Enaid]

'Ni wyddiad neb p'le'dd oeddud,
 Nid hawdd ymadrawdd â mud.
 Tithau yn egwan d'annwyd
 Mewn glwth, ellyll meingul wyd,
 Yn chwyrnu megis chwyrnell,
 Gormodd bw, gŵr meddw, o bell,
 Dra gerddais, anfonais fawl,
 Drwy Geri, gwlad ragorawl,
 A'r Drefnewydd lifwydd lefn,
 Bwrdeistref baradwystrefn.'³³

Last night, late wandering to and fro, the soul did converse with the body which loved falsity, it made a strange confession; the soul said, gracious necessity, 'Where are you, drunken body?' 'What?' said the incomplete body, hasty sense, at the top of his voice, 'What evil, wanton, is the reason for this, what friend, who asks it?' ...

[Soul] 'No one knew where you were, it is not easy to converse with a dumb man. You in a feeble condition on a couch, you are a skinny phantom, snoring like a whirligig, excessive boo, drunken man, from afar, while I walked, I sent praise, through Ceri, excellent land, and the smooth-planked Newtown, borough on the model of Paradise.'³⁴

Part of the humour of the poem lies in the fact that the soul, usually set on higher things, bestows his highest praise on the things of the world: the land, the people, the towns, the houses, the money, and gifts to be earned if only the body would get up and do its job. The soul, in fact, is tempting the body to head for the 'paradise' of Newtown, a borough where rich pickings can be expected, and the three cantrefes of Caeo, 'gwell ... na naw o nef', 'better than nine cantrefes of heaven' (56).

Iolo creates some deliberate verbal echoes of the religious versions of the genre, especially the Welsh prose versions. The prose 'Ymddidan' has the body ask the soul: 'A vyosti yn uffern, mi a

dolygaf yt: or byost dyweit ym beth a weleisti yno' ('Have you been to hell, I'm begging you: and if you have, tell me what you saw there'). In Iolo's poem, the body asks 'A fuost yng ngwlad Fuellt?' ('Have you been to the land of Buellt?', 43) and 'A welaist wŷr Cydweli?' ('Did you see the men of Kidwelly?', 57), an imitation of the question-and-answer format which suggests that the poet's wandering soul should have been visiting the torments of hell but instead has enjoyed the heavenly visions of the Welsh countryside and its wealthy patrons.

A more serious approach to death was taken by Siôn Cent, a poet of the first half of the fifteenth century who composed mainly religious verse on the theme of the vanity of the world. One of his poems describes the order of events on Judgement Day, with the Son of God sitting in majesty with his twelve disciples, the fires of purgatory and hell burning, the sound of the trump, and God turning to deal with the good people and the bad, bestowing mercy on the former and berating the latter for their neglect of him when he was among them on earth. In dramatic fashion, the poet puts words into the mouth of God himself, who pronounces: 'Aed y rhai da, saethfa sêr, / I nefoedd fry, a'u nifer. / Aed y rhai melltgedig / I uffern ddu a'r ffwrn ddig' ('Let the good ones go, like shooting stars, to the heavens above, with their hosts. Let the damned go to black hell and the raging furnace').³⁵ In another poem, Siôn describes humankind's inevitable death, with the body lying in the coffin, growing paler each day, and the soul not knowing what will happen to it:

Yr enaid ni wŷr yna,
O Dduw! I ba ffordd ydd â,
Ai i'r purdan, dirdan dall;
Ar ben awr, ai'r boen arall
Ai'r nef sydd lan ac annedd
I'r saint, dedwyddaf eu sedd.³⁶

The soul does not know then, oh God!, where it will go, whether to purgatory, dark conflagration, straight away, or to another agony, or to heaven which is pure and the dwelling-place of the saints, most blessed their seat.

A longer poem by Siôn Cent on the vanity of the world describes in appalling detail the death and its aftermath of a selfish land-lord – the loss of his worldly goods, his lonely burial, his wife's remarriage, the rotting of his body attended by toads and worms, his relatives not bothering to say masses for him, and his soul

judged ‘ond a wnaeth er Duw’ (‘only [on] what it did for God’).³⁷ Full of rhetorical flourishes to wear down any resistance in his listeners, the poet includes a series of questions beginning ‘where?’, with echoes of *ubi sunt* poems: ‘Mae’r tyrau teg? Mae’r tref tad?’ (‘Where are the fine towers? Where is the town?’). The same syntax is found in some of the earlier body and soul poems, including the one in Peniarth 50:

Och! maer gwynnawt,
 Och! maer tauawt
 A treissawd gwann?
 Och! maer geneu?
 Och! maer geireu?
 Nis goruyddan.³⁸

Alas, where is the white flesh? Alas, where is the tongue which attacks the weak? Alas, where are the lips? Alas, where are the words? They will not defeat it [i.e. death].

A further stage of the assimilation of the body and soul theme into secular literary usage in Wales is represented by dialogue poems between two persons or entities which stand in for the body and the soul. Some of the best examples are found among the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym, the fourteenth-century poet who exemplifies the new style of Welsh poetry after 1282. Widely admired by his contemporaries and later generations of gentry poets, Dafydd’s work covers a wide range of themes and registers, from formal praise poetry addressed to patrons through to humorous sagas of unrequited love. To his fellow-poets, Dafydd is associated particularly with the themes of love and nature, sometimes combined in the same poem, but the natural world is also used by Dafydd to express, often obliquely, a profound spiritual connection with God, experienced not in the rituals and buildings of the established Church but out in the world that God created. Scornful of worldliness in the sense of commercialism and venality, Dafydd seeks a love that belongs to the world of nature, that unworldly world that is as much a testament to God’s power and protection as heaven itself. In many of his poems, then, Dafydd challenges a reductive binary opposition between body and soul, world and afterlife, flesh and spirit, that is the starting point of much orthodox religious writing.

This is not to say that Dafydd is unorthodox or heretical, only that he sometimes affects to speak for the ‘common man’: he holds the Church’s teaching about the vanity of the world up to the light and reveals the inconsistency of the Church in

condemning everything in the world when it is a world that God created. Dafydd's association of religious ritual with popular piety often drives his choice of images and metaphor, as in this reference to the separation of body and soul after death, addressed to the 'body' of a haycock which has been condemned to be dragged from the field and hung in the barn:

Cymynnaf dy gorff adref
 I'r nen, a'th enaid i'r nef.
 Ar lun angel y'm gwely
 Ddyddbrawd uwch taflawd y tŷ,
 Yn dyfod i gnocio'r drws:
 'Y mwdwl gwair, ai madws?'³⁹

I will commend your body home to the roof, and your soul to heaven. In the form of an angel you'll see me on Judgement Day above the hayloft, coming to knock on the door: 'Haycock, is it time?'

A regular feature of Dafydd's poetry, more so than in the work of his contemporaries, is the debate or dialogue, either between the poet and his girl, or between the poet and a bird or an animal or, indeed, a personified concept such as 'hiraeth', 'longing', who speaks its own pedigree, born of tears and sorrow, to the poet.⁴⁰ In one poem, the poet, skulking beneath the eaves of his lover's house hoping to catch a glimpse of her, is accosted by his own shadow, a frightening apparition who says he has appeared 'naked' before the poet, 'i ddangos ... rhyw beth wyd', 'to show you what kind of thing you are'. The shadow claims to know the poet and his faults all too well because they are always together, and although the poet tries to scare the shadow away by throwing insults at it, he is forced onto the defensive to protest his innocence of any sins:

'Pa anaf arnaf amgen
 A wyddost ti, wddw ystên,
 Ond a wŷr pob synhwyrwl
 O'r byd oll? Yty baw diawl!
 Ni chatcenais fy nghwmwd,
 Ni leddais, gwn, leddf ysgwd;
 Ni theflais ieir â thafl fain,
 Ni fwbechais rai bychain;
 Nid af yn erbyn fy nawn,
 Ni rwystrais wraig gŵr estrawn.'
 'Myn fy nghred, pe mynegwn
 I'r rhai ni wŷr'r hyn a wn,

Dir ennyd cyn torri annog,
Fy nghred, y byddud ynghrog.’⁴¹

‘What other fault in me do you know about, pitcher-neck, besides what any sentient being in the whole world knows? Devil’s dung to you! I haven’t bad-mouthed my region, I’ve not struck a blow offside, that I know of; I haven’t thrown stones at hens with a sling-shot, I haven’t frightened small children, I haven’t pinned down a stranger’s wife.’ ‘By my faith, if I were to tell those who don’t know what I know, in no time at all, before the shouting died down, by my faith you’d be on the gallows.’

The image of the poet confronting his other self, in the form of his shadow, is a variant of the debate between body and soul, where the mortal poet protests his innocence but his disembodied self warns him that his sins will be punished. The poem is entirely secular and has a humorous intention, but the doctrinal belief in the split self, divided between flesh and spirit, shapes the allegory of the poet and his shadow.

With its roots in the Latin learning of the schools, kept current in the abbeys around the country, especially those of the Cistercians, Welsh poetry shared many of the literary trends of other vernaculars, including Irish. Both languages had their own, relatively early, traditions of the debate between body and soul, and vernacular writers transmitted biblical and doctrinal material from the Church to the courts of the ruling elites. In Ireland, secular genres such as ‘voyage’ literature dramatised the possibility of a split between body and soul before death. In Wales, in the poetry of Iolo Goch and Dafydd ap Gwilym, we see a more radical form of remediation, where doctrine is demystified and the debate of body and soul, elsewhere a matter of extreme seriousness, becomes a vehicle for poetic parody, humour, and a defiant challenge to the doom-laden warnings of the Church.

A significant medieval genre which appears in a wide range of vernaculars, the dialogue of body and soul transposes the idea of sanctity, achieved through the redemptive suffering of the martyred body, from hagiography to a more secular form of popular literature. Like hagiography, the debate graphically describes the torments of the body by which the soul will eventually be purified, and its didactic emphasis on bodily decay draws on the hagiographical tradition of the decomposition of the saint’s body, from which relics, particularly bones, may be retrieved. In popular poetry, however, there may be sanctity but there is no sainthood: a

passport to heaven for the hapless corpse is the best that can be hoped for.

Notes

- 1 John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, ed. F.J. Furnivall, EETS E.S. 92 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1904), l. 9524 and l. 9517.
- 2 Lydgate, *Pilgrimage*, ll. 9863–71.
- 3 For many medieval thinkers, this meant a belief in bodily resurrection, hence the eventual reunion of body and soul. John Haldane, ‘Soul and Body’, in Robert Pasnau (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 291–304. The theme of bodily resurrection is thoroughly explored by Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- 4 On the development of the idea of purgatory in the thirteenth century, and the use of prayer to mitigate the torments of purgatory, see R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215–c. 1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 36–8 and pp. 225–32. See also Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London: Scolar, 1984); S.G.F. Brandon, *The Judgment of the Dead* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967); Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
- 5 The debate as a form of rhetorical writing in classical and medieval literature covers many topics and contexts, both religious and secular, with homiletic and scholastic texts providing models for vernacular forms such as love debates. For a review of the Latin tradition, see F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), Vol. 2; for examples of vernacular debates, see Michel-André Bossy (ed. and trans.), *Medieval Debate Poetry: Vernacular Works* (New York: Garland, 1987). The English tradition of debate poetry and its relation to dream visions has been discussed by Steven F. Kruger, ‘Dialogue, Debate, and Dream Vision’, in Larry Scanlon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 71–82.
- 6 The poem is edited in G.P. Krapp (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. Vol. II: *The Vercelli Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 55. A second poem on the same theme (‘Soul and Body II’) is found in the *Exeter Book*. See G.P. Krapp (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. Vol. III: *The Exeter Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 174–6. See also Mary Ferguson, ‘The Structure of

- the Soul's Address to the Body in Old English', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 (1970), pp. 72–80.
- 7 The poems are edited by Carleton Brown, *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), nos 20, 29, 38. See also Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 90.
 - 8 The poem is printed in Thomas Wright, *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes* (London: Camden Society, 1841), pp. 346–9. For a discussion, see Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 97–8.
 - 9 Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 98. The 'Desputisoun' is printed by Wright, *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, pp. 334–6, taken from the Bodleian Library, MS Laud 108. Another version of the poem found in the Auchinleck manuscript appears in John W. Conlee, *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991), pp. 23–9. For the list of manuscript witnesses, see Linne Mooney et al. (eds), *Digital Index of Middle English Verse*, no. 605, www.cddc.vt.edu/host/imev/record.php?recID=605 (accessed 20 February 2013).
 - 10 Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 91. 'Noctis sub silentio' was printed by Wright, *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, pp. 95–106; 'Nuper huiusmodi' was printed and discussed by Eleanor K. Heningham, *An Early Latin Debate of the Body and Soul* (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1939).
 - 11 Wright lists as many of the vernacular versions as were known to him, in *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, pp. 321–4. The 'Dialogus' was evidently an enormously popular poem, with over 132 manuscript witnesses surviving.
 - 12 The Irish 'body and soul' debate is associated particularly with the penitential and homiletic traditions. See Henri Gaidoz, 'Le débat du corps and de l'âme en Irlande', *Revue Celtique* 10 (1889), pp. 463–70; Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 259–60. The thirteenth-century Irish prose version of the Latin poem 'Dialogus' was printed by Georges Dottin, 'Une version irlandaise du *Dialogue du corps et de l'âme*, attribué à Robert Grosseteste', *Revue Celtique* 23 (1902), pp. 1–39 (including Dottin's translation of the text into French). For overviews of the tradition in Welsh, see R.M. Jones, 'Ymryson ac ymddiddan corff ac enaid', in J.E. Caerwyn Williams (ed.), *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* 5 (Dinbych: Gwasg Gee, 1970), pp. 44–61; R.M. Jones, *Llên Cymru a Chrefydd: Diben y Llenor* (Abertawe: Christopher Davies, 1977), pp. 176–97; Ifor Williams, 'Dafydd ap Gwilym a'r glêr', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1913–14), pp. 83–204, at pp. 185–91.
 - 13 Gaidoz ('Le débat du corps et de l'âme') has printed the Latin glosses which accompany the Irish text in one of its manuscript witnesses.

- 14 On the contents of *Leabhar Breac*, see Máire Herbert, 'Medieval Collections of Ecclesiastical and Devotional Materials: *Leabhar Breac*, *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* and *The Book of Fenagh*', in Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhan Fitzpatrick (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Academy Library* (Dublin, 2009), pp. 33–43.
- 15 On the theme of the righteous soul's difficulty in leaving the body through one of its orifices, see St. John D. Seymour, 'The Bringing Forth of the Soul in Irish Literature', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1920), pp. 16–20.
- 16 Robert Atkinson (ed.), *The Passions and Homilies from the Leabhar Breac* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1887), no. 36, ll. 8221–3 and 8229–31. Atkinson's translation of the homily begins on p. 507. English translations in this article are mine unless otherwise indicated.
- 17 Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 2000). See also A.O.H. Jarman, *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin: The Black Book of Carmarthen* (London: British Academy, 1986). The first line of the poem is: 'Kyvaenad keluitt kynelv o douit' ('Harmonious song of invention, a song of the Lord').
- 18 A.O.H. Jarman (ed.), *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1982), no. 5 (pp. 7–11). The idea of the three hosts of the dead seems to go back to the seventh-century treatise *De Numero* attributed to Isidore of Seville. See Catherine McKenna, *The Medieval Welsh Religious Lyric* (Belmont, MA: Ford and Bailie, 1991), p. 104.
- 19 The poem is found in National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 27, fol. 164a. It has been edited by Ifor Williams, 'Dwy Gân o Lyfr Coch Talgarth', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 2 (1923–25), pp. 118–30, at pp. 127–30. The phrase quoted is in line 10 of Williams' edition.
- 20 The poem is found in a large fifteenth-century miscellany, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 50, 'Y Cwta Cyfarwydd', p. 60. The poem has been edited by Henry Lewis, 'Dadl yr Enaid a'r Corff', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 3 (1926–27), pp. 119–22. Lewis argues on linguistic grounds that the poem must have been composed before the twelfth century and is therefore of a similar date to the poem in the 'Black Book of Carmarthen'. In the manuscript, the poem is attributed to Y Bergam, a poet of prophecy active in the fourteenth century.
- 21 The *ymryson* is a generic form in medieval Welsh poetry, manifested as a (heated) debate between poets on topics such as love, the sincerity of praise poetry, and the (lack of) talent possessed by a rival poet. For discussions of the form, see A.T.E. Matonis, 'Later Medieval Poetics and Some Welsh Bardic Debates', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 29 (1982), pp. 635–65; Jerry Hunter, 'Professional Poets and Personal Insults: *Ad Hominem* Attacks in Medieval Welsh

- Ymrysonau*, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 13 (1993), pp. 54–65.
- 22 The ‘Ymryson’ was traditionally attributed to Iolo Goch, a court poet composing in the late fourteenth century, and this is a plausible date for both prose versions, though they are found only in later manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Manuscript witnesses of both the ‘Ymryson’ and the ‘Ymddiddan’ are listed by J.E. Caerwyn Williams, “Pethau nas cyhoeddwyd”: 7. Ymryson ac Ymddiddan y Corff a’r Enaid’, *National Library of Wales Journal* 4 (1946), pp. 184–8. The ‘Ymryson’, from National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 34, p. 70, was printed by Ifor Williams, ‘Dafydd ap Gwilym a’r Glêr’, pp. 185–7, and the excerpt comes from this text.
 - 23 In his discussion of a number of Latin and vernacular debate poems, Michel-André Bossy divides them into two categories: ‘either the Soul argues with the Body from a position of moral superiority or it shares guilt with the Body (and often deserves more blame)’, in ‘Medieval Debates of Body and Soul’, *Comparative Literature* 28 (1976), pp. 144–63, at p. 145.
 - 24 Williams, “Pethau nas cyhoeddwyd”, p. 188. Williams has printed the ‘Ymddiddan’ from National Library of Wales, MS 5263B, pp. 279–86.
 - 25 On popular piety in English, see Robert W. Ackerman, ‘*The Debate of the Body and Soul* and Parochial Christianity’, *Speculum* 37 (1962), pp. 541–65, at p. 564.
 - 26 R.I. Best et al. (eds), *The Book of Leinster*, 6 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954–83), Vol. 5 (1967), p. 1222. See also Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), pp. xi–xii. The story is translated by Kenneth Jackson, *A Celtic Miscellany* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1973), no. 229. Jackson attributes the original story to the ninth century.
 - 27 Lambert McKenna, ‘Some Irish Bardic Poems: IV. The Body the Soul’s Horse’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 16 (1927), pp. 592–4; McKenna, ‘Some Irish Bardic Poems: XXVII. The Soul Riding the Body’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 22 (1933), pp. 406–8.
 - 28 The most famous of these tales is *Immram Brain*, ‘The Voyage of Bran’, in which the hero, in a dream, is told to lead a group of travellers across the sea where they experience visions of paradise and a warning against gluttony and greed. See Séamus Mac Mathúna, *Immram Brain. Bran’s Journey to the Land of Women* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); Jonathan Wooding (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000); Barbara Hillers, ‘Voyages between Heaven and Hell: Navigating the Early Irish *Immram* Tales’, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 13 (1993), pp. 66–81.
 - 29 Both versions have been edited in parallel by Ernst Windisch, *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1880), pp. 165–96.

- For the earlier text, with English translation, see Whitley Stokes, *Fis Adamnán* (Simla: Station Press, 1870). The text is discussed and translated by Charles S. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante* (London: D. Nutt, 1908), pp. 28–47. See also St. John D. Seymour, 'The Vision of Adamnán', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 37 (1924–27), pp. 304–12. Medieval visions of heaven and hell were a common site of didacticism, such as the 'Vision of St Paul' (based on 2 Corinthians 12) and the vision of Drythelm cited by Bede in *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, book 5, chapter 12. See Andrew Rabin, 'Bede, Drythelm, and the Witness to the Other World: Testimony and Conversion in the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Modern Philology* 106 (2009), pp. 375–98; Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell: A Sourcebook* (New York: Garland, 1993); Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Italica Press, 1989).
- 30 The vision was composed in Latin prose and is also found in a number of German redactions. There is no version in Irish before the sixteenth century. For a translation of the text, see Jean-Michel Picard (trans.), *The Vision of Tnugdal* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1989), and for the Latin text see Albrecht Wagner (ed.), *Visio Tnugdali: Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1882).
- 31 Picard, *Vision of Tnugdal*, p. 148. For a useful discussion of the vision as an attack on the body, see Jan Swango Emerson, 'Harmony, Hierarchy, and the Senses in the *Vision of Tundal*', in Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (eds), *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 3–46. On the stages of hell, purgatory, and heaven through which Tnugdal passes, see Carl Watkins, 'Doctrine, Politics and Purgation: The Vision of Tnúthgal and of Owein at St Patrick's Purgatory', *Journal of Medieval History* 22 (1996), pp. 225–36.
- 32 For an account of Iolo's life and a selection of his poems, see Dafydd Johnston (ed.), *Iolo Goch: Poems* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1993).
- 33 Johnston, *Iolo Goch: Poems*, no. 14, ll. 1–10 and 25–34.
- 34 The translation also comes from Dafydd Johnston's edition of the poem (pp. 56–8) though I have printed it as prose rather than poetry. Johnston translates *gormodd bw* (line 30) as 'excessive boo', taking *bw* in its sense of 'fear, fright', but the alternative meaning, attested only from the fifteenth century, is 'roaring of a bull' (*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, p. 350). A translation such as 'too much roaring' perhaps makes better sense here.
- 35 Siôn Cent, *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, eds Henry Lewis et al. (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1937), no. 94, ll. 29–32 at p. 282. The editors have titled this poem 'I'r Farn Fawr' ('To the Great Judgment'). Its first line is 'Rhyfedd yw byd, rhwyfodd beth' ('Strange is the world, some kind of thing').

- 36 Siôn Cent, *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, no. 85, p. 257, ll. 23–8. The title of the poem is ‘I’r Byd’ (‘To the World’) and the first line is ‘Llyma y byd, cyd cadarn’ (‘Behold the world, a strong union’).
- 37 Thomas Parry (ed.), *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), no. 58, at p. 101. The title of the poem is ‘I Wagedd ac Oferydd y Byd’ (‘On the Emptiness and Vanity of the World’), and its first line is ‘Pruddlawn ydyw’r corff priddlyd’ (‘Full melancholy is the body in the ground’). The poem has been translated by Joseph Clancy, *Medieval Welsh Lyrics* (London: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 177–81.
- 38 Lewis, ‘Dadl yr Enaid a’r Corff’, p. 121.
- 39 Dafydd Johnston et al. (eds), *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2010), no. 66, ll. 29–34.
- 40 Johnston et al., *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym*, no. 90.
- 41 Johnston et al., *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym*, no. 63, ll. 41–53.

6

Chaucer and hagiographic authority

Jennifer L. Sisk

While much has been written about Chaucer's debt to French, Italian and Classical literature,¹ comparatively little attention has been devoted to Chaucer's engagement with hagiography, even though writing about the saints was the most popular and widespread medieval narrative tradition.² Chaucer's own legend of St Cecilia is generally regarded as the first (or most) *literary* example of vernacular hagiography produced in late medieval England, but his engagement with the tradition goes far beyond the application of verbal artistry to the celebration of sanctity. After writing this legend (later repurposed as the tale told on the road to Canterbury by the Second Nun),³ his approach to hagiography is never straightforward again, though it provides a repeated stimulus to his imagination and proves to be a fertile field of literary experimentation for him. In the *Legend of Good Women* he deploys large-scale hagiographic structures and focusing techniques within a secular context, modelling his collection of stories about Love's martyrs after a saints' legendary.⁴ His hagiographic experimentation continues, but more complexly, in the *Canterbury Tales*, where we find sophisticated borrowings of hagiographic motifs and a nuanced deployment of the hagiographic mode in secular as well as religious tales. Engagement with hagiography in the *Tales* manifests itself in multiple literary gestures: a blending of its conventions and concerns with the commitments of other genres, the assignment of tales purporting to make hagiographic truth claims to unreliable narrators, and the insertion of hagiography and hagiographic-like tales into provocative dialogue with a range of other discourses.

Chaucer's multiple hagiographic experiments reflect not only his interest in 'the powers of the holy' but also a subtler yet more significant influence of hagiography on Chaucer than Chaucerian scholarship has generally recognised, the ramifications of which extend beyond his hagiographic tales to colour the entire literary

project of the *Canterbury Tales*.⁵ The nature of this influence lies in what I will call hagiographic authority, a powerful legitimising force, inherent in narratives celebrating the sanctity of Christian saints, to which, I will argue, Chaucer seems to have felt a simultaneous attraction and aversion.⁶ The tales that feature his most complicated engagement with hagiography – the pseudo-hagiographic tales told by the Man of Law, Clerk and Physician – are semantically dense, interpretively problematic and compelling or disturbing precisely because of their negotiations of hagiographic authority, an enterprise that is never fully successful because the authorising strategies of hagiography are in their fullest realisations unavailable to a fictionalising poet. As a discourse whose truth claims are legitimised by the Christian God and sanctioned by his allied worldly institution, the Church, hagiography confidently assumes that an unproblematic alignment with the text's ideology will govern its readers' interpretive practices. Chaucer's pseudo-hagiographies cannot claim similar divine sanction; however, the locus of power partially or completely vacated by hagiographic authority in these tales allows for the development of a distinctly Chaucerian articulation of the literary, characterised not by appeal to an otherworldly higher power but rather by a poetics of disinterestedness emanating from a vantage point over and above multiple competing claims to authority. This Chaucerian poetics assigns an ethical burden of interpretive responsibility to reading and locates literary value in the complexity and indeterminacy that renders challenging interpretation necessary.⁷

I want to begin this discussion by noting a generally unremarked similarity between the Chaucerian corpus and the hagiographic tradition: for purposes of textual authorisation, neither body of literature – though for very different reasons – foregrounds or explicitly privileges the category of the author or invests this governing figure with prestige and accessible individual subjectivity. In fourteenth-century England, literary authority was still being negotiated in the vernacular, and Chaucer's typically humble and self-deprecating self-presentation is symptomatic of authorial anxiety. Even the authorial pride suggested by the 'Go, litel bok' stanza of the *Troilus* is counterbalanced by the humility it expresses, as Chaucer directs his 'little' book merely to kiss the steps on which he imagines the great writers of antiquity standing, but not to take up a deserved place beside them.⁸ As Alastair Minnis has demonstrated, Chaucer was generally uninterested in presenting himself in his poetry as a modern author in the

tradition of the great *auctores* of antiquity. Within the fiction of the *Canterbury Tales* he instead adopts the (dis)guise of the compiler, whose primary work – far less august – is merely to repeat or to report the words of others, in this case the various pilgrims with whom the narrator Geffrey travels to Canterbury.⁹ It was customary for medieval compilers to add some personal expression to their compilations, and Geffrey does so via the two tales he contributes to Harry Bailly's contest (the exercise in *reductio absurdum* that is the *Tale of Sir Thopas* and the moral but seemingly endless *Tale of Melibee*).¹⁰ What is most noteworthy about Geffrey-the-pilgrim's performance, however, is that it accomplishes just the opposite of establishing the narrator as an effectively authoritative wielder of words.¹¹ It is a good-natured joke by the author at the author's own expense, and it bespeaks nervousness about anchoring literary authority in the author's persona.

Hagiography may have held a special appeal to Chaucer precisely because it was an esteemed discourse that did not find its authorisation in the figure of the author. Despite the importance to the hagiographic tradition of such names as Athanasius and (for English) Ælfric, medieval hagiography was not a genre that privileged the category of authorship. Indeed, we can read Gregory of Tours's famous reference to the (singular) life of the (plural) saints as drawing attention not only to *imitatio Christi* as a way of living that unites the saints in relation to a singular exemplar but also to the genre's self-plagiarising tendencies and heavy reliance on convention.¹² As Cynthia Hahn notes, hagiography is constructed to create an effect in the audience, and as such its authors "disappear" in service to the audience's needs'.¹³ It is therefore reasonable to expect that a medieval writer's engagement with hagiography would not stimulate the development of an authorial poetics but rather would inspire a retreat from authorial glory and its attendant responsibility. We might see Chaucer's adoption of the compiler role in this light, were it not for the anxiety in his Retraction, which reveals his deep – indeed, authorial – sense of responsibility for what he has written over the entire course of his career.¹⁴ This angst may stem from awareness that his fiction lacks the kind of legitimising authority that renders a powerful authorial presence irrelevant to hagiography. Given Chaucer's disinclination to construct his own authorial persona as strongly authoritative, the absence of divine sanction poses a special challenge: without the pedestal of the *auctor* and without the unadulterated power of sanctity, how can a vernacular poet convey to his audience a sense

that his poetry has value – that it matters in some way that exceeds the recreational? One of Chaucer's primary concerns, especially late in his career, seems to have been this issue.

In the *Legend of Good Women* we find Chaucer experimenting with competing methods of textual authorisation. Although we might think of the *Legend* as another case in which Chaucer adopts the role of the compiler, since his narrator retells well-known stories from classical antiquity, the dream vision prologue destabilises that position. The opening dream establishes a framing fiction that sets up the text as the product of the poet's dreaming mind, a construct that turns authorial responsibility back on the dreamer, who – as always in Chaucer – is a figure for the poet. At the same time, however, modelled as it is after a saints' legendary, the *Legend of Good Women* invokes an authorising principle that, within his fiction, is analogous to that of the Christian God.¹⁵ The appearance of the God of Love to the Prologue's dreamer explicitly juxtaposes (pseudo-) hagiographic 'divine' authorisation with the authority that resides in the persona of the poet.¹⁶ The Prologue thereby brings into tension two methods of literary authorisation underwriting Chaucer's text, and it is a tension that the *Legend* never resolves. This unstated agon contributes to what Catherine Sanok has termed the poem's 'radically indeterminate' nature and the fact that readers cannot reach consensus on whether or not the text should be read ironically.¹⁷

With the exception of the legend of St Cecilia (if read on its own and not as the *Second Nun's Tale*), hagiographic techniques of literary authorisation are always in tension with other authorising strategies in Chaucer's works, in part because Chaucer never writes a text that is exclusively and unproblematically hagiographic. As soon as hagiography is secularised, transformed into hagiographic romance, or juxtaposed with pointedly non-hagiographic texts (the first of these procedures takes place in the *Legend of Good Women*; all three occur in the *Canterbury Tales*), hagiographic authority breaks down, and the text cannot simply stand on its own as a voicing of Christian cultic tradition expressing not-to-be-questioned hagiographic truth. Julia Reinhard Lupton argues that by means of hagiography Chaucer 'glean[s] past texts for overlooked histories, alternate characterizations, and divergent moral and hermeneutic codes, thus opening hagiography up to precisely those elements that exceed the Christian worldview distilled by the genre'.¹⁸ My argument here is that opening hagiography up to enable it to resonate beyond the constraints of Christian values

and beliefs also enables Chaucer to experiment with authorising strategies that exceed the very same boundaries. For this reason, the pseudo-hagiographies in the *Canterbury Tales* are the best places to look for the alternative strategies that Chaucer deploys to approximate hagiographic authority and to compensate for its lack.

In addition to aligning the pseudo-hagiographic tales with hagiography through the use of recognisable hagiographic motifs and the invocation of religious authority through scriptural analogy,¹⁹ the most obvious authorising strategy that Chaucer uses is the citation of other writers and story-tellers whose tales his narrators claim merely to reproduce. This technique replaces divine sanction with the weight of secular tradition and with the literary authority Chaucer found in Classical and Italian texts. The Physician, whose tale begins the sixth fragment of the *Canterbury Tales* with no preceding prologue or linking material from a prior performance, immediately invokes the authority of the Classical tradition by announcing that he tells his tale ‘as telleth Titus Livius’ (6.1). As if to remind his audience that Livy was a Roman historian and not a writer of fiction, he later insists that what he is saying ‘is no fable, / But knowen for historial thyng notable’, perhaps protesting too much by adding, ‘The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute’ (6.155–7). His final statement recalls a similar protestation of ‘storyal soth’ in the account of Cleopatra’s martyrdom in the *Legend of Good Women* (l. 702).²⁰ In a similar spirit, though more expansively, the Clerk prefaces his performance by explaining to the Host,

I wol yow telle a tale which that I
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 ...
 Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rhetorike sweete
 Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie.²¹

Although the tradition invoked is different (the great poetry of the Italians so admired by Chaucer), the effect is the same: the narrator avoids reference to God or the Church and also avoids claiming any personal responsibility for the tale about to be told. These invocations of the authoritative weight of history and poesy feel plausible and are at least initially successful, until compromised by the speakers’ particular emphases and editorial commentary. By contrast, the Man of Law, whose tale is the most overtly aligned of the three with the imperatives of Christian belief, de-authorises his own performance by relating it to a notoriously unreliable

tradition: he explains that he learned it from 'a marchant' (2.132), having just insisted that merchants are 'fadres of tidynges' (2.129). As well illustrated by Chaucer's *House of Fame*, 'tidynges' can be true reports, but they can also be mere rumours (the sense of the word most apt for travellers' tales).²²

Chaucer extends his authorising efforts for the pseudo-hagiographies in the *Canterbury Tales* by invoking more abstract sources of authority as well. Here I draw upon Jacqueline T. Miller's description of the broad range of external authorities a poet can invoke to sanction or certify a text (a list that includes but goes beyond divine sanction and the invocation of *auctores* discussed above). She explains that a sanctioning authority may also take the form of 'a traditionally accepted system of belief, a fixed principle of order ... or the structure of the actual or the natural'.²³ For a medieval poet, such gestures come very close to invoking divine sanction but avoid it in a way that allows for fictional contexts outside of Christianity. Thus, in the *Physician's Tale* Virginia's supreme virtue and beauty (and her beauty's consequence, at least as Harry Bailly sees it) are authorised by Nature, who 'hath with sovereyn diligence / Yformed hire in so greet excellence' (6.9–10). Likewise, Custance's plight in the *Man of Law's Tale* is contextualised within and legitimised by an inescapable governing fate that is unreadable by human beings, whose 'wittes' are too 'dulle' to fathom it (2.202). In neither case, however, does Chaucer allow the authorising principle to stand unqualified. The Physician's Nature invokes a still higher power ('He that is the formere principal' [6.19]), and the Physician qualifies Nature's authorising claim – 'My lord and I been ful of oon accord. / I made hire to the worshiþe of my lord' (6.25–6) – by admitting that it is merely hypothetical: 'Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye', he concludes (6.29). The Man of Law likewise complicates the authority of what 'in the sterres, clerer than is glas, / Is writen' (2.194–5) by repeatedly implicating Satan (2.365, 582) and calling upon the 'lord of Fortune' (2.448). While astrological fate, Satan, and God may be working collaboratively in this tale, the effect is to suggest that Custance's life is battered by multiple, and sometimes competing, forces. Qualifications such as these are entirely characteristic of Chaucer's handling of authorising strategies in the *Canterbury Tales*.

The *Clerk's Tale* and the *Physician's Tale* (in which the female protagonists' virtues are less overtly anchored to Christianity and its values than they are in the *Man of Law's Tale*) treat secular virtue that is comprehensible in pagan as well as Christian contexts

as a legitimating principle in its own right. Here Chaucer experiments with whether virtue unaccompanied by sanctity can lend transcendent meaning to a narrative in a manner comparable to hagiographic virtue. But the tests that Walter inflicts on Griselda to prove her patience and Virginia's death at her father's hands to protect her chastity (narrative events meant to highlight the very virtues they measure and enshrine) fail to render those virtues sufficiently transcendent. In the *Clerk's Tale*, we can discern significant cracks in what the text puts forth as Griselda's perfect patience. When she no longer believes that she is really Walter's wife because he has divested her of her aristocratic garments and announced his approaching nuptials with another woman, Griselda breaks her former promise to assent to Walter's will and 'nevere ... to grucche it, nyght ne day' (4.354). Taking it upon herself to counsel her former husband in his treatment of his next wife, she admonishes him,

O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentynge
This tendre mayden, as ye han doon mo;
For she is fostred in hire norissynge
Moore tendrely, and, to my supposynge,
She koude nat adversitee endure
As koude a povre fostred creature.²⁴

By belatedly labelling the treatment she previously met with equanimity as 'tormentynge' and 'adversitee', Griselda lodges a complaint that undercuts precisely the virtue that the text celebrates in her. Moreover, her weeping and swooning when reunited with her children effect a complete break in her character, causing this secular 'saint' to become a normal woman and mother. The very fact that we rejoice in her breakdown reveals the difficulty the text has in asserting the transcendent value of Griselda's patience. Similarly, and perhaps even more profoundly, the preservation of Virginia's chastity in the *Physician's Tale* fails to render her death a convincingly justifiable 'martyrdom'. As Sanok has shown, the text succeeds in imitating hagiography formally but fails hagiography's 'hermeneutic priorities' precisely because hagiography provides no meaning to the circumstances of death that Virginia, an innocent pagan girl, experiences.²⁵ Alternative contexts of meaning for this tale could be invoked, but Chaucer refuses to supply them.²⁶ This conundrum lies at the heart of critical assessments of this tale that deem it a literary failure.

Secular virtue is less absolute than hagiographic virtue. Whereas hagiographic virtue derives from sanctity and functions as a public sign of it, secular virtue, an end in itself, does not necessarily signify anything larger. It can occur in varied contexts and against a backdrop of varied assumptions, which may or may not esteem it as ideal and optimally valuable. The more complex a narrative celebrating secular virtue, the more necessary some additional form of authorisation is to counteract its audience's potentially varied response. Chaucer attempts to provide something extra through his narrators' moralising efforts. Rather than simply telling their tales, the Clerk, Physician, and Man of Law each provide interpretive directives to the audience, although these directives never emerge uncontested. The Man of Law repeatedly interrupts his narrative with emotional outpourings that model how his tale should be received, often with an extremity of affect that calls his interpretive agenda into question. The effect is most notable when he laments in direct address to the otherwise well-loved and fortitudinous Custance (whom an unnamed knight has framed for murder), 'Allas! Custance, thou hast no champioun, / Ne fighte kanstow noght, so weylaway!' (2.631–2), adding his fervent hope that Christ will grace her with a miracle. Such directives are unnecessary in true hagiography, where there is an understood alignment of writer, reader, and central character.²⁷ These moments in the tale thus draw attention to the Man of Law's strained efforts to control the message he communicates to his diverse listeners. The Clerk offers similar interpretive instruction by incorporating into his tale Petrarch's allegorical reading of the story, according to which Griselda's wifely patience represents the way that Christians 'Sholde be constant in adversitee' (4.1146), a moralising effort that would be unproblematic if the Clerk did not continue his performance for another ten (in most manuscripts, eleven) stanzas that undercut rather than underscore the allegory. The Physician likewise tacks a moral onto his tale – 'Heere may men seen how synne hath his merite' (6.277) – but this message too rings hollow because it is impossible to find in it any relevance to Virginia, the undeserving secular 'martyr' whom Chaucer has positioned at the centre of this tale through a careful adaptation of his sources.²⁸

Such alternative authorising strategies clearly do not succeed in investing these tales with legitimacy comparable to unadulterated hagiographic authority. In a sense, such failure is inescapable: hagiography acquires its authority by means of its clear, uncomplicated, and – because divinely sanctioned – unquestioned agenda.

Outside of a discourse that possesses such clarity of purpose and function, any unambiguous meaning for human action is harder to assert in a way that is powerfully convincing. Miller argues that when other authorising principles fail, it is the individual voice of the author that 'emerges to be tested as its own principle of authority'.²⁹ While this may be the case in other literature, I want to suggest that in the *Canterbury Tales* there arises a rather different phoenix. In Chaucer's hands, this failure of authorisation seems to be generated at least in part by design, in order to raise the spectre of competing value systems and interests. Indeed, Chaucer's incompletely successful authorising techniques in the pseudo-hagiographic tales seem purposely to highlight the absence of the 'uniform point of view' that true hagiography cultivates.³⁰ What Chaucer does in these tales is in the same spirit as what Janet M. Cowen finds in the representation of Lucrece in the *Legend of Good Women*, in which some attention is drawn away from Lucrece's intensity of virtue because 'her picture is set in a background in which an interest in other aspects of human conduct, both inside the tale itself and in the work as a whole' distract from that single focus.³¹ An analogous statement could be made about Custance, Griselda, or Virginia: in each of these tales the circumstances surrounding the female protagonist are sufficiently complex to render a celebration of the text's central virtue an inadequate justification for the story.

Part of the difficulty lies in Chaucer's representation of these women. In the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer is committed to experimenting with the development of psychologically plausible subjectivities for his characters. Such an enterprise obviously runs athwart hagiographic concerns and purposes, as we can see illustrated in Chaucer's true hagiography, the legend of St Cecilia. Cecilia is not revealed to have a complex psychology or to be subject to the ordinary human emotions that influence most people's daily lives. She is paradigmatic in her saintliness and celebrated in a way that highlights her resemblance to other female martyrs of the early Church as they are presented in other hagiographies. What matters is her generic intensity of virtue, which simultaneously derives from and reveals her sanctity. The text therefore plays down her biographical uniqueness. To a certain extent, a similar muffling of biographical particularity can be seen in Chaucer's treatment of the heroines of the pseudo-hagiographic tales. However, he allows each of these women momentary outbursts that suggest greater psychological plausibility. I have already discussed Griselda's

moment of 'grucchyng'. Comparable to it are Custance's complaint to her father when she is finally reunited with him after a lifetime of wandering and tribulation ('Now, goode fader, mercy I yow crye! / Sende me namoore unto noon hethenesse' [2.1111–12]), and Virginia's request 'to compleyne a litel space' about her impending death in the manner of Jephtha's daughter (6.239). While these tales strive for the authority that accrues around the unalloyed intensity of hagiographic virtue, the breakdown of pseudo-hagiographic character in these women reveals that such intensity – outside the context of true hagiography – is fundamentally unsustainable. The voices that emerge in these especially charged moments come from value positions that are just enough different from those espoused by the rest of the text to belie any assertion of uniform meaning.

A narrative pattern discernible in the *Canterbury Tales*, in which confessional performances follow immediately upon tales that strive for hagiographic authority,³² speaks in an interesting way to the polyvalency we have observed emerging out of Chaucer's experiments with authorising strategies. These performances take the form of prologues in which Canterbury pilgrims talk about themselves and their ideas at length before telling tales that are informed by the complex characters constructed in the 'autobiographies' that precede them. We see this, for example, in Fragment VIII, where the Second Nun's account of St Cecilia's martyrdom is followed by the Canon's Yeoman's confessional monologue and tale. The same pattern, though involving pseudo-hagiography, occurs in Fragment VI, in the juxtaposition of the Physician's account of Virginia's secular martyrdom and the Pardoner's performance.³³ The same juxtaposition can be seen in the transition from Fragment II to Fragment III, where the Man of Law's performance is followed by the Wife of Bath's.³⁴ Lee Patterson suggests that this pattern is intentional and the generic juxtaposition important enough to Chaucer to stimulate the introduction into the Chaucerian polity of a wholly new character (the Canon's Yeoman) whose confessional performance serves as a companion piece to the Second Nun's Tale.³⁵ These assertions of independent voices expressing very particular and non-transcendent views, as if in response to tales that strive for hagiographic authority, demonstrate not only Chaucer's interest in idiosyncratic subjectivities but also the fact that even the tales supported by the most successful authorising strategies may be out of sync with at least some of Chaucer's audience.

The confessional prologues in fact reinforce a phenomenon that

begins to occur even before the preceding performances are concluded. Out of Chaucer's gestures at alternative methods of literary authorisation there emerge competing vectors of interest. For example, immediately following the Physician's uncomfortable application of an inapt moral to his troubling tale, Harry Bailly offers an interpretation of the story of Virginia that differs from the Physician's own, in which he blames Virginia's beauty for her death (6.297). Similarly inadequate to the tale that has just been told, Harry's interpretation, in its difference from the Physician's, invites us to take a critical distance from both readings. The Clerk, in his own performance, resists Petrarch's allegorical understanding of the story of Griselda by inserting editorial commentary about husbandly and wifely behaviour that implies that the story is in fact not allegorical (4.460–2, 621–3, 696–705). Moreover, he refuses to give Petrarch's interpretation the last word, instead tacking onto the tale a series of concluding gestures that revert to the theme of how wives should or should not behave. Emblematic is the 'Lenvoy de Chaucer', which celebrates 'archewyves' who speak up (4.1183–206) but is prefaced by the Clerk's claim to "stynte of ernestful matere" (4.1175), leaving the audience unsure what his actual position on wives is. While the Man of Law's interpretive directives are left unanswered (except implicitly, in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, which takes the place of a response), the effect generated by Custance may be the most powerful of all. With the exception of her single emotional outburst to her father, her extreme passivity renders her 'an enigmatic cipher, a self-masking blank for the fantasy of others, including her narrator'.³⁶ Despite the Man of Law's efforts to control his tale's interpretation, in other words, his own treatment of character opens up a space for multiple interests by allowing for competing semantic uses of Custance.

Chaucer's generation of competing interests is most pronounced in the overall structure of the *Canterbury Tales*, which allows hagiographic and pseudo-hagiographic tales to enter into dialogue with a range of other discourses, creating an effect that is altogether different from that produced by the structure of a saint's legendary, in which generic repetition denies access to alternative discursive performances. This contextualisation stages acts of reception in which the audience is not necessarily the one imagined or implied by the tales themselves. This disjunction draws attention not only to the complicated relations that exist between an author and an audience but also to the different varieties of investment and interest that

different subjectivities bring to writing and reading. Although Chaucer's pilgrims are united by the Christian devotional purpose of pilgrimage (a purpose that presupposes a commitment to the very cult of saints that hagiography celebrates), they are not by any means an ideal hagiographic audience, as their own tales amply demonstrate. In the *Canterbury Tales*, even the otherwise strong truth-claims of straightforward hagiography appear programmatic in the uncomfortable positions they must sometimes occupy with respect to other interests. This happens with the *Prioress's Tale* and the *Second Nun's Tale*, the two tales most exclusively concerned with sanctity, by the way the first is undercut by its unreliable narrator and the second rendered nostalgically naïve in its relation to the worldliness of the subsequent Canon's Yeoman's performance.³⁷ The effect is even more pronounced for the performances of the Man of Law, Clerk, and Physician, which are already interpretively complex due to their mixed generic contexts and the conflicting sets of emphases that make them pseudo-hagiographies. Hagiographic contextualisation in the *Canterbury Tales*, in other words, brings the issue of competing interests and values to the fore.

Despite Chaucer's interest in the narrative development of psychologically plausible subjectivities, it is significant that he does not anchor the literary authority of the *Canterbury Tales* in an assertion of his own poetic authority or even in that of the poet-persona he assiduously develops for his narrator. In his final masterpiece he in fact seems to eschew the hegemony of the single authorising mind and even any suggestion that literary value might be the product of a univocal perception of people, events, and ideas. He instead cultivates competing values and commitments within his text, all the while stepping back to a position of authorial disinterestedness that, I suggest, is the hallmark of Chaucer's articulation of the literary late in his career. Such an authorial stance has the potential to be a deceptive cover for stronger agendas and is therefore in keeping with the 'strategies of indirection, obscurity, and displacement' that tend to disguise literary instrumentality in the Ricardian period.³⁸ It also provides Chaucer a way around what Patterson has termed the 'interpretive preemptions' of culturally reaffirmative courtly 'makyng' and authoritative religious discourses,³⁹ opening up textual spaces for conflict, ambiguity, and indeterminacy. The effect is not uniformly successful, at least in terms of the art of the *Canterbury Tales* (witness critical resistance to the *Physician's Tale*, for example). The achievement lies not in the realm of aesthetics

but rather in the configuration of the audience's challenging – even potentially fraught – relationship to the text. These tales are interpretively difficult and disturbing – precisely the qualities that incite complex reactions from an audience and inspire debate more weighty than, say, the discussion initiated by a typical *demande d'amour*. As Anne Middleton argues, the result places a tall order of interpretive responsibility on readers.⁴⁰ What I want to emphasise here is the context from which this particularly Chaucerian quality emerges. In the *Canterbury Tales* it is most pronounced in the pseudo-hagiographies, where the absence of pure hagiographic authority stimulates Chaucer not only to experiment with alternative methods of textual authorisation but also to focus on techniques that subordinate or displace the figure of the author.

The disinterestedness that I take to be a characteristic of the Chaucerian literary, appealing as it may be to modern critical sensibilities, did not have an extensive literary afterlife among Chaucer's immediate successors. The qualities that recent scholarship has highlighted in fifteenth-century constructions of a vernacular literary differ in important ways from the Chaucerian literary I have described. Sanok defines the fifteenth-century literary as an imaginative space 'defined by its remove from the social world', 'not the by-product of the secular, but precisely that which is imagined as its alternative'.⁴¹ Chaucer's readers have long noted the poet's interest in society; however, if we understand Chaucerian disinterestedness as a vantage point over and above – as opposed to *in* – the social world, then we can perhaps see it paving a way toward the Lancastrian poets' reconfiguration of literariness. For the Lancastrians, however, literature's distance from the social world is not characterised by disinterestedness but rather by a sense of moral absolutes that only find coherence in a realm exempt from social exigencies.⁴² In this regard it may be significant that self-consciously literary production in fifteenth-century England particularly flourished in hagiography, and that this sacred genre literally began to be marked by authorship as fifteenth-century hagiographic poets began naming themselves in their texts, thereby asserting their authorial status.⁴³ The Lancastrian poets succeeded in merging the inherent sacred quality of hagiography with the potential power of vernacular literary authorship,⁴⁴ something Chaucer himself declined to do. One of the great ironies of English literary history, of course, is that they did it in Chaucer's name.

Notes

I would like to thank Bobby Meyer-Lee, Seeta Chaganti, and Cynthia Turner Camp for their good suggestions about this project when it was in its early stages, and Isaac Cates for several helpful conversations along the way.

- 1 The critical literature on these subjects is extensive: noteworthy studies include Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957); Piero Boitani (ed.), *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Warren Ginsberg, *Chaucer's Italian Tradition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002); David Wallace, 'Chaucer's Italian Inheritance', in Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 36–57; John M. Fyler, *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- 2 Scholars of hagiography often note the ubiquity of this narrative tradition: see for example Catherine Sanok, 'Reading Hagiographically: The *Legend of Good Women* and its Feminine Audience', *Exemplaria* 13 (2001), pp. 323–54, at p. 341; Katherine J. Lewis, 'History, Historiography and Re-writing the Past', in Sarah Salih (ed.), *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 122–40, at p. 123.
- 3 Chaucer refers to the 'lyf ... of Seynt Cecile' in the F Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* (l. 426), indicating that he wrote it sometime before 1386–7. All quotations of Chaucer's poetry follow Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
- 4 J.M. Cowen suggests that Chaucer may use the word 'legend' in this context to invoke the popular *Legenda Aurea*, whose overarching structure, abbreviated style, and limited but specific emphases inspired Chaucer's secular legendary: see Cowen, 'Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women": Structure and Tone', *Studies in Philology* 82 (1985), pp. 416–36, at pp. 417, 420. For a discussion of vernacular genre terms for hagiography, see Paul Strohm, 'Passioun, Lyf, Miracle, Legende: Some Generic Terms in Middle English Hagiographical Narrative', *Chaucer Review* 10 (1975), pp. 62–75, 154–71.
- 5 The quote is a reference to the title of the inspiring book by David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996).
- 6 I borrow the concept of hagiographic authority (here and in this

- chapter's title) from Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 367. I committed to this project shortly before learning of Lee's illness and death – I wish I could have discussed these ideas with him.
- 7 My argument owes a debt to Anne Middleton's essay on the moral ambiguities of the *Physician's Tale*, 'The *Physician's Tale* and Love's Martyrs: "Ensamples mo than ten" as a Method in the *Canterbury Tales*', *Chaucer Review* 8 (1973), pp. 9–32.
 - 8 The stanza ends, "But litel book, no makying thow n'envie, / But subgit be to alle poesye; / And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace / Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace' (5.1789–92).
 - 9 A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), p. 198.
 - 10 Minnis, *Theory of Authorship*, p. 200.
 - 11 As Lee Patterson demonstrates, Chaucer uses his pilgrim-persona's tale-telling opportunities to try on the very different hats of the minstrel (in *Sir Thopas*) and the counsellor of princes (in the *Melibee*), but what emerges from the performance is that neither one is adequate for the authorial role Chaucer himself is pursuing; see Patterson, "What Man Artow?": Authorial Self-definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989), pp. 117–75.
 - 12 For a fuller discussion of the implications of Gregory's grammatical construction, see Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 6–10.
 - 13 Cynthia Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart: Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of Saints from the Tenth through the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 30.
 - 14 Minnis notes this Chaucerian paradox, explaining that the medieval compiler customarily did not take responsibility for the text he produced (*Theory of Authorship*, p. 208).
 - 15 Catherine Sanok claims that the *Legend of Good Women* is 'thoroughly hagiographical', that 'the poem's engagement with hagiography in fact registers on every level of the text' ('Reading Hagiographically', p. 340). She demonstrates that the text's debt to hagiography is evident not only in the way it mimics a saints' legendary's repetitiveness, brevity and narrow thematic focus but also in its address to a feminine audience (pp. 330–1).
 - 16 Julia Reinhard Lupton finds in this convergence a premature effort on Chaucer's part 'to force a particular blossoming of secular literature in the interstices of hagiography', an effort that would find more successful fruition in Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's own *Canterbury Tales*; see Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and*

- Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 74.
- 17 Sanok, 'Reading Hagiographically', p. 345.
 - 18 Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints*, p. 81.
 - 19 Hagiographic motifs are most abundant in the *Man of Law's Tale*; for example, the miracles God works through Custance (e.g. 2.477–8) and the way she is miraculously fed while at sea (2.498–504). Custance is represented in a way that calls to mind the Virgin Mary (2.834–40), as is the Clerk's Griselda (4.559–60), who is also described in a way that associates her with Christ (4.206–7, 440–1). Moreover, each of the pseudo-hagiographic tales lends religious weight to the strength and suffering of the protagonist via scriptural analogy: Custance fends off a would-be rapist as David did Goliath (2.932–8), Griselda's fortitude in the face of Walter's marital tests resembles Job's strength (4.932–8) and Virginia's desire to lament her plight echoes that of Jephthta's daughter (6.238–44). On the resemblance to Mary of Custance and Griselda, see Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), p. 217.
 - 20 Matthew Woodcock notes that the narrator's claim to 'storyal soth' is similar to the expressions of hagiographic truth found in the *Legenda Aurea*; see Woodcock, 'Crossovers and Afterlife', in Salih, *Companion*, pp. 141–56, at p. 151.
 - 21 *Canterbury Tales* 4.26–27, 31–33.
 - 22 See *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. 'tiding(e (n.))', 1 and 2.
 - 23 Jacqueline T. Miller, *Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 5.
 - 24 *Canterbury Tales* 4.1037–43.
 - 25 Catherine Sanok, 'The Geography of Genre in the *Physician's Tale* and *Pearl*,' *New Medieval Literatures* 5 (2002), pp. 177–201, at p. 181.
 - 26 Sheila Delany examines the significance of the tale's removal from its context in Roman political history, in 'Politics and the Paralysis of Poetic Imagination in the *Physician's Tale*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 3 (1981), pp. 47–60, at p. 51.
 - 27 Cowen notes that in hagiographic discourse 'the assumptions of the central subject, the writer, and the pious reader are identical' ('Chaucer's *Legend*', p. 435). For a discussion of the relationship between author and audience in hagiography, see also Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, pp. 18–22, and Sanok, 'Reading Hagiographically', p. 329.
 - 28 For a discussion of the relationship between the *Physician's Tale* and Chaucer's source texts, as well as a brilliant close-reading of the tale's final verse paragraph (in which the Physician assigns the tale its ill-fitting moral), see Middleton, 'The *Physician's Tale* and Love's Martyrs', esp. pp. 10–14.

- 29 Miller, *Poetic License*, p. 5.
- 30 As Cowen notes, the same is true of the *Legend of Good Women*, and it is another important way in which Chaucer's secular legendary deviates from a saints' legendary ('Chaucer's *Legend*', p. 435).
- 31 Cowen, 'Chaucer's *Legend*', p. 433.
- 32 Patterson observes this pattern (*Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 367).
- 33 As Patterson notes, the pattern can also be seen in Fragment 4, in the juxtaposition of Clerk and Merchant, though the Merchant's self-representation is not as fully developed as the Pardoner's and Canon's Yeoman's (*Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 368 n. 2).
- 34 In Fragments VI and VIII linking material indicates that it was Chaucer's intention to join these narratives in this particular order. In the case of the Man of Law and Wife of Bath, the tales do not occur within a single fragment, but if we accept the order of the tales in the Ellesmere Manuscript and Patterson's argument that the Man of Law's epilogue is a direct link between these two performances, then here too we can see this pairing as Chaucer's intention; see Patterson, *Putting the Wife in Her Place*, The William Matthews Lectures (London: Birkbeck College, 1995).
- 35 Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 368.
- 36 Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 191. For an interpretation of the tale according to which the story's suppressed incest theme emerges obliquely in the covetous fantasy with which the Man of Law himself fills in Custance's 'blank', see Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Constance and the World in Chaucer and Gower', in R.F. Yeager (ed.), *John Gower: Recent Readings* (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1989), pp. 65–93.
- 37 On the significance of this contextualisation for our understanding of the Second Nun's performance, see Jennifer Sisk, 'Religion, Alchemy, and Nostalgic Idealism in Fragment VIII of the *Canterbury Tales*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010), pp. 151–77.
- 38 Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 25.
- 39 Patterson, "'What Man Artow?'"', p. 122. For further discussion of the cultural limitations that constrained courtly 'makynge', see Anne Middleton, 'Chaucer's "New Men" and the Good of Literature in the *Canterbury Tales*', in Edward W. Said (ed.), *Literature and Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 15–56, at pp. 31–2, and Middleton, 'The *Physician's Tale* and Love's Martyrs', pp. 27–8.
- 40 See Middleton, 'The *Physician's Tale* and Love's Martyrs', pp. 15–16. For an extension of Middleton's argument that is more critical of the tale as a literary achievement, see Elizabeth Allen, *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Later Middle English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), pp. 84–99.

- 41 Catherine Sanok, 'Saints' Lives and the Literary after Arundel', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 469–86, at p. 486.
- 42 In a comparison of Chaucer's treatment of Virginia in the *Physician's Tale* with Lydgate's fifteenth-century version of the story, Allen writes that for Lydgate 'poetry's obligation is not to raise questions but to sustain moral order' (*False Fables and Exemplary Truth*, p. 84).
- 43 Sanok, 'Saints' Lives,' p. 469. Sanok significantly develops Nicholas Watson's passing observation about fifteenth-century hagiographers' tendency to name themselves in their texts; see Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitution of 1409', *Speculum* 70 (1995), pp. 822–64, at p. 833.
- 44 For an exploration of how Lydgate accomplishes precisely this feat, see Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48.

7

Reading classical authors in Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*

Sarah James

To characterise John Capgrave as a writer of 'literature' has been, until recently, to court controversy, if not outright dissent. In his foreword to the Early English Text Society's edition of Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*, Frederick Furnivall spares no time to consider what, if any, literary merit might attach to the work, being instead concerned to provide a rather patronising author portrait before launching into an embittered attack upon Carl Horstmann's editorial decision-making; the text, it seems, is of no more than antiquarian concern.¹ More recently M.C. Seymour dismisses Capgrave's literary credentials; his *Life of St Norbert* is described as his 'first attempt in verse ... perhaps as an experiment in literary ambition', while *St Katherine* is at best 'neatly ordered and suitable for piously uncritical literates. Neither life', he continues, 'has anything to recommend it to another audience and neither rises above the general mediocrity of the genre'.² Implicit in Seymour's criticism here is the question of genre, Capgrave being damned by his association with hagiography; the sanctity of his subject-matter, far from acting as a guarantee of quality, appears instead to condemn his work out of hand.³ Yet some scholars have taken rather more trouble to explore what claims Capgrave might have to be counted among his literary forebears and contemporaries, with a particular emphasis on his *Life of St Katherine*. Derek Pearsall has suggested that the *St Katherine* is deeply indebted to the style and conventions of English metrical romances, notably *Havelok*, yet he also concedes that it should in some respects be regarded as 'a continuation of the Chaucer-Lydgate tradition of embellished rhetorical hagiography'.⁴ In a relatively brief survey of the form and style of Capgrave's text, Jane Fredeman notes verbal features such as repetition and syntactical balance, which she ascribes to a possible north-west Midlands source. She also notes that the *St Katherine* is distinguished by the development

of character and the production of vivid, believable debate scenes, and nods towards the possibility of dramatic influences upon the latter; but she considers Capgrave's use of imagery, with one or two exceptions, to be generally repetitive and trite.⁵ Starting from the assumption of Chaucer's influence on fifteenth-century writing, Mary-Ann Stouck assesses the same text in search of correspondences with *Troilus and Criseyde* but, despite pointing to a small number of broad similarities, admits that there are no substantive verbal echoes of Chaucer to be found in the text. Crucially she regards this as symptomatic of a broader failure of fifteenth-century hagiography, which mires Capgrave's work in the popular – and by implication, non-literary – conventions of romance. 'The discrepancy between the ambitious concept and its stylistic execution', she asserts, 'is characteristic of much of Capgrave's century. It is a reminder of the fledgling state of English as a literary language.'⁶ The verdict is damning because, as a 'literary' writer, it seems that Capgrave is both too early and too late: too early, because English has not yet developed to a point where it can meet the demands of his subject; too late, because the towering example of Chaucer places an insurmountable pressure upon him to perform at a similar level, which he simply cannot hope to achieve. His decision to produce hagiographies just makes matters worse, since for many scholars they represent a genre which can have no reasonable claim to literary merit.

The reality is, however, that relatively few scholars have given detailed attention to Capgrave as a writer of literature, preferring instead to adopt a cultural studies approach which involves mining his works – especially the *Life of St Katherine* – for their possible application to religious, social, and political contexts. This is understandable, for the *Katherine* in particular provides much material which is apposite to the discussion of heresy, the rise of lay literacy, and political dissatisfactions in the fifteenth century.⁷ In this chapter, by contrast, I propose to look again at Capgrave's claims to be considered a 'literary' writer, and like my above-mentioned predecessors I shall focus my attention on his *Life of St Katherine*.⁸ I have noted elsewhere his use of vivid imagery and sense of audience;⁹ here my attention is directed specifically towards what seems to me to be Capgrave's self-conscious desire to place himself within a tradition of authorship extending much further back than his immediate predecessor Chaucer, evidenced in his use of classical authors, especially Virgil. Crucially, this is an aspect of the text for which I have been able to find no precedent

in other extant lives of the saint in Middle English. There is no evidence to point to an exemplar from which Capgrave might have worked, and which might therefore have furnished him with this classicising framework; the book in ‘derk langage’ to which he refers in the Prologue to Book One (I.62), and from which he asserts his own text was drawn, has never been identified, if indeed it ever existed. The only other fifteenth-century life of comparable length is that found in Harvard University, Houghton Library MS Richardson 44, a manuscript which has been dated to the second quarter of the fifteenth century, and hence is contemporaneous with Capgrave’s text. It includes a substantial *vita*, the content of which is very similar to that of Capgrave’s version, although it is written in prose rather than rhyme royal stanzas. Among the extant lives, this text bears the most resemblance to Capgrave’s, but it entirely lacks the permeation with classical reading which characterises his work. As such, comparisons between the two provide useful evidence for what I am claiming as Capgrave’s distinctive approach.

At first glance the search for classical precedents in Capgrave’s text might appear to yield relatively little of interest; indeed, with the exception of Book Four the references are few. Yet a closer examination suggests that Capgrave introduces them with a careful eye to their effect. For example, in Book Two, during the celebrated Marriage Parliament, the Prince of Paphon recommends that Katherine submit herself to a speedy marriage, adducing Ovid in support of his argument:

It is bettir, my lady dere,
 In sech a caas whan it mote nedis be doo,
 To do it at onys than for to lyve in dwere [perplexity]
 And for to abyde eythir yer or too.
 Take ye no heed? Consyder ye not ther-too,
 How Ovyde seyde and wrote it in his booke:
 ‘Whan thing is newe bewar betyme and looke
 For to amende it, for medecyn comyth ovyr late
 Whan that the man is dead and hens i-goo’.¹⁰

This is the kind of allusion we encounter frequently in medieval literary texts; it is perhaps particularly reminiscent of Chaucer’s Wife of Bath’s famous injunction to ‘Redeth ovyde’, as the Prince directs Katherine to a classical source and, incidentally, seeks to display his own learning.¹¹ Chaucer, of course, is playing with his readers at this point; it is well known that the Wife of Bath has

misread her Ovid, talking of Midas' wife instead of his barber in a story which appears to rebound upon its teller, as anyone who takes her advice and turns to the *Metamorphoses* will quickly discover. Such playfulness seems typically Chaucerian and we are well accustomed to his games. The same cannot be said for Capgrave, and yet I wish to suggest that he is attempting something similar. The 'booke' to which the Prince refers is Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, and the section he goes on to quote is one which warns against hasty love – precisely the opposite advice to that which he is actually offering Katherine.¹² The similarity to the Wife of Bath goes further, for the Prince misquotes his source to meet his own purposes. In Ovid's text the caution is against loving too readily, for once embroiled, the lover will find it difficult to free himself; the Prince, by contrast, uses the quotation to urge Katherine on to love, lest in hesitating she should lose her opportunity. As in Chaucer, so here the misused antique source undermines the person using it, at least for those readers who know their Ovid. The use of this strategy may suggest that Capgrave owes a greater debt to Chaucer than has previously been acknowledged, indulging in what Daniel Wakelin characterises as a particular type of English 'classicism' in the form of Chaucerian allusion.¹³ Yet it also demonstrates that Capgrave's knowledge of Ovid is sufficient to enable him to incorporate a quotation into his text precisely in order to indulge in this moment of gentle satire. Such moments are, admittedly, quite rare in the text, but even so their presence does lead us towards an impression of Capgrave working quite self-consciously within a literary tradition that includes both the recent example of Chaucer and the much more remote authors of the classical past.

As mentioned above, it is in Book Four of Capgrave's text that his indebtedness to classical sources is most apparent. This is surely no accident; Book Four recounts events after Katherine has returned from her mystical marriage to Christ, and includes an account of Maxentius' imperial power struggles which ultimately result in his arrival in Alexandria, before moving on to detail the early stages of his conflict with the saint. This is the first explicit introduction of Roman history and culture into the text, where it collides violently with the world of the newly converted Katherine; it also contrasts sharply with the exotic, almost oriental, and highly civilised environment of her girlhood. The resulting clash of cultures brings about a distinct change of mood in Book Four, and thus it is perhaps appropriate that Capgrave should have recourse to Latin writers in particular at this point. At a superficial level we

might regard this as the insertion of a little 'period colour'; more significantly, their presence allows him to create his own miniature culture shock within the text, challenging his readers with the juxtaposition of antique and Christian traditions. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that some of his references are brief and non-specific; twice he makes allusions to classical mythology, once in an early description of pagan ceremonies at the temple, and again much later during Katherine's debate with the fifty pagan philosophers (IV.390–406 and 1517–47). The allusions may reveal some acquaintance with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, but deities and events are mentioned in such general terms that it is impossible to identify specific sources. They may not, indeed, refer directly to antique texts at all, but may simply reflect the ubiquitousness of such references in late-medieval English writing, which form a kind of common literary currency which is passed from hand to hand with no particular thought for origins. In contrast, there are other moments in Book Four which can be much more securely tied to classical precedents, and it is to these that I now turn.

Like the other books which make up his text, Book Four opens with a Prologue, which in this case serves the purpose of allowing some narrative time to pass before the action of the story resumes. Capgrave utilises this brief pause to insert his own authorial voice into the text in comments about contrasting approaches to labour and social responsibility among mankind, before turning to Katherine's newly Christianised way of life which, he asserts, epitomises diligent service to God and man. The Prologue is, however, most striking for the inventive use Capgrave makes of classical precedent, as he draws a parallel between mankind and the society of bees which is clearly indebted to the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*. Capgrave's Prologue opens by distinguishing two different types of 'erdely dwellers' in his contemporary world: those who are prepared to labour, and those who 'are not profitable' (IV.1, 15). Men in these two categories he likens to bees, whether the industrious workers or the unproductive drones. It is important to emphasise that here Capgrave is stepping outside his narrative; he is not, at this moment, discussing the protagonists in his hagiography, but potentially real men and women such as he might have seen around him on the streets of Lynn. In this respect there is a clear correspondence with Virgil's mode of proceeding in the *Georgics*, in which the ostensible aim of informing a farmer about agricultural and arboricultural practices is directed to the

wider issue of the welfare of society. In his poem Virgil locates the source of renewed welfare in a rejection of Rome's urban focus in favour of a return to productively working the land.¹⁴ Like Virgil, Capgrave is critical of those who, like the drones, 'ete and drynk, devowre eke and wast: / Thei labour noght but if it be at table' (IV.16–7). These human drones contribute nothing practical to their communities, nor to wider society; worse, their indolence extends to the spiritual sphere, and they are unwilling to expend effort on any 'goostly occupacyoun' (IV.26).¹⁵ This foray into social philosophy has no parallel in MS Richardson 44; the anonymous author of that text betrays no concern with life outside of his narrative, and thus observations on human nature have no place in his text, unless they impinge directly upon the life of his protagonist.

Even Capgrave cannot sustain his philosophising for long, and his attention soon returns to Katherine. Sustaining the bee imagery, he indulges in imaginative development of the metaphor:

On of these bees was this same qweene,
 The mayd Kateryne, which with besynesse
 Of every floure which was fayre to seene
 Sokyd oute hony of gret holynesse,
 Bare it to hyve, and there she gan it dresse –
 For it wyll do servyse bothe to God and man.
 That same lycoure which sche gaderyd than,
 This hony gadered sche fere and woundyr wyde:
 In the lawe of nature laboured sche forrest,
 Where sche the vyces lerned to ley osyde
 And vertues to chese as a clenly nest[.]¹⁶

It is instructive to read MS Richardson 44 at the same point:

of al þe substaunce of hir faders lyflode she kept bot a lytell to hir self and all the remenaunt wyth al hir faders tresour she disposed to þe sustenaunce of þe pore | puple. She loued not to here or see eny playes or iapes or eny veyn or worldly wordes or songes bot oonly she gaf hir to study of holy scripture and þat wyth gret diligence ... she kept þe clennes of hir virgynyte. And in þis wyse she dwelled in hir faders paleys full of alle vertues and graces as þe ryght dere and singlere spouse of almyghty god.¹⁷

The ideas conveyed in these passages are strikingly similar. In both, Katherine is seen doing good to the people: in MS Richardson 44, by distributing her inherited fortune to the poor; in Capgrave's text, by preparing the 'hony of gret holynesse' so that it might 'do servyse' to man. Likewise both describe Katherine as eschewing

vices and acquiring virtues, while the ‘clennes’ of the virginity of the one is echoed in the ‘clenly nest’ of the other. Capgrave, however, chooses to give additional colour to this material by extending the bee metaphor of the *Georgics*; the study of Scripture becomes holy honey, and while the saint of MS Richardson 44 dwells in her father’s palace, Capgrave’s Katherine chooses to nest, bee-like, in her virtues. This is, I suggest, clear evidence of a specifically literary consciousness; having adopted Virgil’s imagery, Capgrave recognises its potential as moral allegory to enrich his own narrative, and he develops it with genuine creativity. He is not, of course, entirely original in adapting the social life of bees to a religious context; Virgil’s choice of language invites us to play with a possible connection when he opens his own exposition by promising to speak of the *mellis caelestia dona* (‘heavenly gift of honey’), while his later (erroneous) description of the asexual reproduction of bees – *neque concubitu indulgent, nec corpora segnes / in Venerem soluunt* (‘they neither indulge in concupiscence nor sluggishly weaken their bodies in sexual love’) – is felicitously suited to appropriation to the life of a virgin saint.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the elaboration of the imagery is all Capgrave’s own, and it is, I suggest, playful and surprising in its imaginative scope. Indeed, one could argue that Capgrave takes a further hint from Virgil; the application of the bee metaphor to one of the foremost saints of the western Christian Church shows him recognising the possibilities of ‘comparing small with great’ for his own artistic and didactic purposes.¹⁹

Much later in Book Four Capgrave turns to one of the most celebrated episodes in lives of St Katherine: her debate with fifty pagan philosophers. As I have already mentioned, this is characterised by a number of references to the classical gods as Katherine asserts the supremacy of the true Christian God over the pagan pantheon; but my real interest here lies in the speech of the saint just before the debate proper begins, in which she resolutely turns away from the classical authorities who had previously constituted her learning.²⁰ The extract is rather lengthy, but is worth quoting in full.

I hafe left all my auctores olde,
 I fonde noo frute in hem but eloquens.
 My bokes be go, goven or elles solde.
 Farwell Arystotyll, for full grete expens
 Made my fadyr and had full grete diligens
 To lerne me thi sotill bokes alle,
 Of dyverse names as thu ded hem calle.
 Of Omere eke hafe I take my leve,

With his fayre termes in vers and eke in prose
 Ful erly sat I and eke full late at eve
 To lerne the texte and to lern the glose –
 I hafe chose bettyr, treuly, I not suppose
 But wote full well. Farwell eke Ovyde;
 Thou loved full wele blynd Venus and Cupyde.
 I hafe take leve of Esculape and Galyene
 And of all her pryvy sergyng of nature.
 I hafe a lessoun mech trewere to susteyne
 And more directe to know creature.
 Ye, Plato bokes eke I you ensure
 We hafe do now, we schall nevyr more mete,
 Ne him Phylstyoun, bothe phylosophyre and poete.²¹

The range of authorities thus rejected is interesting in itself: Katherine mentions two philosophers, two poets and three physicians, the last of whom, Philistion, she also credits with poetical ability. Again a comparison with MS Richardson 44 is illuminating:

þe philosophye and disputyng of Omer, þe crafty sotyltees of
 Aristotel, the wyse fyndyngs of pryue þynges of Esculapie and
 Galien. and þe famous bokes of Philistion and Plato and of other
 auctors I haue vtterly reproued.²²

The substantive content of the two texts is almost identical; with the exception of Ovid, the same authors appear in each, a correspondence which exemplifies the close relationship between the two. In Capgrave's version, however, Katherine's farewell takes a more elaborate form; in her rejection of the authors she lingers long enough to recall the powerful personal associations conjured up by their names. Aristotle is not merely a philosopher, but one for the study of whom her father was prepared to go to great expense; knowledge of Homer's 'fayre termes' was acquired through long days and late nights of diligent application. The effect of this speech is significant. In the context of the narrative it provides some real depth to Katherine's character, offering us a glimpse of how she reflects upon her past experience. The insight thus gained helps transform her from generic saint, conventionally unencumbered by human concerns, into something approaching a realistic human being, in the not unusual situation of realising that something for which she has worked hard over many years must be relinquished. This concern for developing characterisation through the construction of interior consciousness appears elsewhere in Capgrave's text, notably during the Marriage

Parliament in Book Two, and surely demonstrates his 'literary' intentions;²³ more importantly, I suggest it invites the reader to rethink the very concept of sanctity. Rather than an omnipotent, untroubled and depersonalised attribute, it is revealed as a process of becoming, difficult to attain and requiring both assiduous attention and personal sacrifice. Thus the 'humanisation' of Katherine implicitly rejects the reification of sanctity in favour of a more active model which offers the reader genuine exemplarity; Capgrave seems to be suggesting that she is, in many ways, quite like the rest of us, and thus we can realistically strive to be more like her.

In addition, the speech contributes substantially to Capgrave's self-constitution as a writer, constructing an image of scholarly endeavour which reflects positively on Capgrave himself. It suggests a clear parallel between sanctity and literary endeavour as it subtly reminds the reader that learning, whether classical or otherwise, is not attained without considerable effort and sacrifice. This is a topos frequently encountered in medieval literary texts; for example, in *The Parlement of Fowles* Chaucer offers his readers something similar when he awakens at the end of his dream:

I wook, and other bokes took me to
 To rede upon, and yet I rede alway;
 In hope, y-wis, to rede so som day
 That I shal mete som thing for to fare
 The bet; and thus to rede I nil not spare.²⁴

Chaucer will not cease to read 'alway' in the hope that his books will reveal something worthwhile that will help him, and perhaps his own readers, 'to fare / The bet'. The image evoked here is one which demands both sympathy and respect from the audience, as the more usual pleasures of life are rendered subservient to the scholarly imperative, and it would surely appeal to Capgrave quite as much as to Chaucer himself. There is also, perhaps, an element of wistfulness in the tone of Capgrave's speech which supports the suggestion that it has some personal resonance for its author. Yet this is not to suggest that we should interpret these words as Capgrave's own valediction to classical learning; after all, the very persuasiveness of the tone employed suggests that the 'eloquens' of 'auctoures olde' is still very much at his disposal. Perhaps Capgrave is once again playing with his readers, deploying the rejection of classical learning motif while simultaneously undercutting it with a demonstration of the continued value of such learning. Notwithstanding her lingering

farewell to classical authors, Katherine continues to utilise her rhetorical training in the ensuing debate with the philosophers, and arguably it is her persuasive power, quite as much as the logic of her argument, which enables her to triumph. The concept of sanctity is thus further problematised; if, as I suggest, it can be regarded as a process, then that process clearly embraces a range of adaptations and accommodations, including apparent reversals and contradictions, in order to move towards its goals. Furthermore, Capgrave appears to be proposing a model of sanctity which is inextricably bound up with rhetorical expertise and literary prowess – his own as well as Katherine's. Such an elision of saintly and literary concerns is strikingly original, but carries a very convincing logical force when emanating from the pen of Capgrave, a friar devoted to scholarship.

From the foregoing it will be clear that I am suggesting Capgrave had read Virgil's *Georgics*, or at least the fourth book, or a commentary thereon, as well as being acquainted with a number of other classical texts, perhaps including Virgil's *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* and *Remedia Amoris* of Ovid; we must therefore ask how likely it was that he would have had access to such materials. Research undertaken by both Peter Lucas and Karen Winstead suggests that Capgrave undertook preliminary education at Norwich before progressing, first to London, and then to Cambridge; thus it is primarily to the libraries of the Austin Friars in these locations, as well as to that at Lynn, that we must look for evidence.²⁵ Here of course we encounter an immediate problem; the fraternal libraries suffered in the same way as those of other religious institutions at the Dissolution, and records are correspondingly scanty. Moreover, there is at least some evidence to suggest that fraternal libraries may have been in decline even before the 1530s; as James Carley notes in relation to the Austin house at Cambridge, 'all indications suggest that by the time Leland visited the convent [in the mid-1530s] the library was in a state of total disarray', and the house had 'practically dissolved itself'.²⁶ The result, he suggests, is that '[o]ur knowledge of [fraternal] libraries tends to be "off centre" and depends on the idiosyncratic tastes of individual collectors and annotators such as Leland himself'.²⁷ This caution seems scarcely necessary, given the paucity of extant records; thus far I have been unable to identify any manuscripts containing classical literary materials which can be conclusively connected with Capgrave. The records from Norwich and London yield nothing of this kind, and

unfortunately there seems to be no evidence at all relating to the Austins' library at Lynn. The records pertaining to Cambridge are now only recoverable in fragmentary form, many of the manuscripts from all the fraternal libraries in that city having been acquired by Cardinal Cervini at the Vatican by the mid-1540s; it may be that in the future a more substantial reconstruction of that library's contents will be feasible.²⁸ This all seems deeply unpromising; fortunately it is certainly possible to point to some wider evidence suggesting that the Austin Friars were not averse to reading classical authors. We are fortunate that the catalogue of the order's library at York, drawn up in 1372, survives as Dublin, Trinity College MS D.1.17.²⁹ It notes two copies of Virgil, both containing the *Eclogues*, *Aeneid* and *Georgics*, as well as Servius' commentaries on the two latter texts. These appear among a substantial collection of other classical writings which include the *Aeneid*, the *Metamorphoses*, and even the *Remedia Amoris*, indicative of the eclecticism of what we might now term the acquisition policy of the library.³⁰ Humphreys suggests that the York collection is anomalous among mendicant libraries in England, and this may be so; yet given Carley's warning we should not, perhaps, accede too readily to this suggestion, since it may look anomalous simply because other records have been lost. In any case, the evidence is that at least some Austin Friars at York had access to the works of Virgil, Ovid, and other classical authors, as well as to later commentaries. Given that it is also clear that Capgrave had quite detailed knowledge of some of these texts, notably Book Four of the *Georgics*, we must assume that at some stage in his career he was able to access them, and this could quite possibly have been during his studies in either London or Cambridge, the extant records (or lack thereof) notwithstanding.

The potential availability of such classical texts might lead us to ask whether we can consider Capgrave as in some way a successor to the group of so-called 'classicising friars' of the fourteenth century, identified by Beryl Smalley.³¹ Smalley suggests that the activities of her group of friars was restricted in scope and duration; numbering only seven, they were drawn exclusively from the Dominican and Franciscan orders, and flourished for a short period between around 1320 and 1350. Subsequent work by Christopher Baswell suggests that we might wish to extend the period of activity of friars deeply concerned with classical scholarship by at least thirty years, based upon his examination of a detailed *Aeneid*

commentary in British Library Additional MS 27304, dateable to the last two decades of the fourteenth century and probably localised to Norwich.³² Suggestively for this chapter, his research indicates that a lively interest in the engagement with, and moral allegorisation of, classical literature may well have existed at a time and place in which John Capgrave was receiving his early education. I must emphasise that there is no evidence to suggest any direct contact between Capgrave and MS Additional 27304, or the writer of its commentary; nevertheless we can at least point to possible continuities between Smalley's 'classicising friars', the commentary in the Norwich manuscript, and Capgrave's own literary endeavours of the 1440s. In each case we encounter sustained and imaginative engagement with classical texts, and a desire to render them both comprehensible and relevant to contemporary concerns. If Carley's suggestion that the Cambridge Austins were reading classical Latin in the 1520s is correct, then the tradition may in fact extend much further, requiring a quite radical reassessment of fraternal reading and writing in the later Middle Ages.³³

In conclusion, I wish to suggest that it is possible to make some rather firmer claims for the literary qualities of Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine* than have been made hitherto. By consciously utilising the precedents of classical authors in his own work he is laying down a marker, implicitly asking his readers to set him alongside those same authors and judge him accordingly. Admittedly sometimes the references are slight enough to be discounted as mere tags and space-fillers; however, this cannot be said of his use of the bee allegory from the *Georgics*. Here we have very clear evidence of Capgrave's capacity to develop a set of ideas in the service of his text, creating a sustained moral allegory which is both apt and imaginatively constructed.³⁴ Daniel Wakelin suggests a tendency among fifteenth-century authors to use classical material 'to fatten their own style. It is', he says, 'as if they wrote in togas'.³⁵ The image is memorable, and in many cases the accusation is justified, but in Book Four of the *Life of St Katherine* we cannot dismiss Capgrave's practice as the kind of donning of literary fancy dress that Wakelin seems to be imagining.³⁶ Instead he thoroughly reworks the bee allegory, absorbing it into his own text so that it becomes a vivid and relevant part of his saint's life. It is also clear that he has grasped the wider philosophical implications of Virgil's text which he is able to apply to the ills of humanity in general, the classical exemplum becoming a possible guide to contemporary living.³⁷

We should also consider the deft nod of the head which Capgrave gives to Chaucer in the delightful misreading of Ovid's *Remedia Amoris* in Book Two. The gesture in the direction of the Wife of Bath is neither heavy-handed nor ponderous; on the contrary, it is accomplished with exceptional lightness of touch, revealing an unexpected sense of humour. As I have suggested above, it is not unusual to encounter Chaucerian allusions in fifteenth-century English writing, and indeed the search for Chaucer's continued literary influence has fuelled much scholarly debate.³⁸ In his exploration of humanist reading and writing in this period, Wakelin suggests that we might regard such allusions as 'slightly used, second-hand', when compared with texts which reveal direct and incontrovertible evidence of engagement with classical sources themselves.³⁹ This may well be so; nevertheless my intention here is not to make the case for Capgrave as a humanist, but as a writer of literature.⁴⁰ That being so, his deliberate development of Katherine's character in his narrative might be regarded as a sign of a specifically literary consciousness at work. Unlike many – perhaps most – hagiographers, Capgrave is clearly willing to resist the conventional constraints on invention imposed by the genre, being instead concerned to show his protagonist as a 'real' person, with interior thoughts and memories which colour her responses to the events which unfold around her. The result is that Katherine is not merely a saint to be marvelled at, but a young woman who inspires sympathy, admiration, and sometimes irritation to a degree which we might well expect from Chaucer, that most 'literary' of writers, but not necessarily from the friar whom Seymour considers to be a pedlar of hagiographical mediocrities. In his careful and subtle self-construction as an author, too, it is clear that Capgrave regards himself as in some sense engaged in a similar activity to that of his literary predecessors, both recent and antique. Perhaps most important of all, he also offers a much more complex and nuanced model of sanctity than most of his predecessors, a model in which the protagonist and hagiographer are inextricably implicated in each other's endeavours. Both strive for perfection, encounter challenges and reversals, and find themselves using unexpected sources of knowledge and experience in pursuit of their aims. Writing the lives of saints has always been to some extent a sanctified act, a labour made holy by its subject-matter; but in Capgrave's hands this labour is elevated to new heights as he suggests that the sanctity lies in the scholarly application and literary skill of the author quite as much as in the holy example of Katherine herself.

Notes

- 1 Carl Horstmann, 'Forewords', in Horstmann (ed.), *John Capgrave: The Life of St Katharine of Alexandria*, EETS O.S. 100 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1893), pp. v–xxviii.
- 2 M.C. Seymour, *John Capgrave*, Authors of the Middle Ages 11 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), p. 221.
- 3 Seymour is certainly not alone in his critique of hagiography; as Sarah Salih notes, the genre has long suffered from suggestions that it is 'too crude and too stereotypical', 'static and derivative', and its piety can be alienating to a modern secular reader; see Salih, 'Introduction: Saints, Cults and 'Lives' in Medieval England', in Sarah Salih (ed.), *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 1–23, at p. 20.
- 4 Derek Pearsall, 'John Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine* and Popular Romance Style', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975), pp. 121–37, at p. 123.
- 5 Jane C. Fredeman, 'Style and Characterization in John Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 62 (1980), pp. 346–87.
- 6 Mary-Ann Stouck, 'Chaucer and Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*', *American Benedictine Review* 33 (1982), pp. 276–91, at p. 291.
- 7 See for example Karen A. Winstead, 'Piety, Politics, and Social Commitment in Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 17 (1991), pp. 59–80, and 'Capgrave's Saint Katherine and the Perils of Gynecocracy', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 361–76; Anke Bernau, 'A Christian *Corpus*: Virginité, Violence, and Knowledge in the Life of St Katherine of Alexandria', in Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (eds), *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 109–30; and Sarah James, "'Doctryne and studie": Female Learning and Religious Debate in Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*', *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 36 (2005), pp. 275–302.
- 8 John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 1999). All references will be given by book and line numbers in the text. My focus on this text is determined by restraints on time and space, rather than a dismissal of the possible literary qualities of Capgrave's other works.
- 9 Sarah James, 'The Verse Saints' Lives of John Capgrave and Osbern Bokenham', in Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *A Companion to Fifteenth Century English Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013).
- 10 Capgrave, *Katherine*, II.575–83.

- 11 Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), l. 982.
- 12 Ovid, *Remedia Amoris*, in E.J. Kenney (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis: Remedia Amoris, Amores, Medicamina Faciei Femineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 [1961]), ll. 91–3.
- 13 Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 66.
- 14 See for example W.Y. Sellar, 'Motives, Form, Substance, and Sources of the *Georgics*', in *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 174–98; 'Introduction', in Virgil, *The Georgics*, trans. L.P. Wilkinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), pp. 20–6.
- 15 Capgrave is here participating in a long tradition which emphasises the moral or ethical purposes of poetry, for a discussion of which see Vincent Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450', in Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2: *The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 145–235, at pp. 147–50.
- 16 Capgrave, *Katherine*, IV.43–53.
- 17 Fols 20v–21r. In quoting from this manuscript I have silently expanded abbreviations, and have where necessary inserted minimal punctuation to aid comprehension.
- 18 R.A.B. Mynors (ed.), *Virgil, Georgics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), Book IV.198–9.
- 19 Virgil's own comparison, *si parua licet componere magnis* ('if small may be compared with great'), is between the activity of the bees and the Cyclopean work of forging thunderbolts under Mount Etna (*Georgics*, IV.176).
- 20 For a further example of this motif in hagiography, see the legend of St Eugenia in Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), Vol. 2, p. 165.
- 21 Capgrave, *Katherine*, IV.1324–44.
- 22 MS Richardson 44, Fol. 33r.
- 23 See for example Katherine's long interior monologue: Capgrave, *Katherine*, ll. 155–96.
- 24 Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Parlement of Fowles* in Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, ll. 695–9. Chaucer's emphasis on the need to continually strive, through reading, for greater knowledge echoes the urging of Boccaccio in Chapter 12 of *The Genealogy of the Gentile Gods*; see A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott (eds), with the assistance of David Wallace, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 428–31.

- 25 See Peter Lucas, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997), and Karen A. Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), Chapter 1.
- 26 James P. Carley, 'John Leland and the Contents of English Pre-Dissolution Libraries: The Cambridge Friars', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1986), pp. 90–100, at p. 91.
- 27 Carley, 'John Leland', p. 93. Thus, for example, Leland's somewhat erratic mode of recording items, and his demonstrable preference for the works of English writers, clearly skews his cataloguing endeavours.
- 28 Neil Ker and Andrew Watson have identified a number of manuscripts from the Cambridge Austin Friars, many of which are now in the Vatican Library. See Neil R. Ker (ed.), *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964); and Andrew G. Watson (ed.), *Supplement to the Second Edition* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1987). See also Neil R. Ker, 'Cardinal Cervini's Manuscripts from the Cambridge Friars', in Raymundus Creyten and Pius Künzle (eds), *Xenia Medii Aevi Historiam Illustrantia*, 2 vols (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 51–71.
- 29 The existence of this manuscript was first noted by James H. Todd, 'Ancient Libraries: Library of the Augustinian Eremites of York', *Notes and Queries* 1 (1849), pp. 83–4.
- 30 K.W. Humphreys (ed.), *The Friars' Libraries*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 1 (London: British Library, 1990).
- 31 Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960).
- 32 Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 158–9.
- 33 Carley, 'John Leland', p. 91. There is, of course, plenty of evidence for broader scholarly engagement with classical texts throughout the Middle Ages; see for example Minnis et al., *Medieval Literary Theory*, especially Chapter 8; Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century'; Kevin Brownlee, Tony Hunt, Ian Johnson, Alastair Minnis, Nigel F. Palmer, and James Simpson, 'Vernacular Literary Consciousness c. 1100–c. 1500: French, German and English Evidence', in Minnis and Johnson, *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, pp. 422–71; Rita Copeland and Peter T. Struck (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapters 10–11; James G. Clarke, Frank T. Coulson and Kathryn McKinley (eds), *Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapters 9–10.
- 34 Brownlee et al. note 'a firm belief in the importance of individual skill in the rewriting of received matter' among medieval writers

manifesting a clear literary consciousness, a belief surely exemplified by Capgrave's practice; see 'Vernacular Literary Consciousness', p. 428.

- 35 Wakelin, *Humanism*, p. 63.
- 36 For a brief but suggestive discussion of the fissure between surface and sentence in medieval writing, see Brownlee et al., 'Vernacular Literary Consciousness', pp. 445–7.
- 37 For a politicised reading of this type of exemplarity, see Wakelin's discussion of William Worcester's *Boke of Noblesse*, in *Humanism*, pp. 108–5.
- 38 See for example the work of Stouck discussed above.
- 39 Wakelin, *Humanism*, pp. 65–6.
- 40 Arguably Capgrave's use of the *Georgics* as described in this article might lend some weight to the suggestion that he be considered a humanist writer, but a much broader assessment of his works would be necessary before any such argument could be sustained.

8

Lydgate's saintly poetics

Anke Bernau

While most scholarship on the works of John Lydgate has tended to concentrate on 'secular' works such as *Troy Book* (c. 1412–20) or *Fall of Princes* (c. 1431–38), more recently some voices have started to speak out about the innovative aspects of his religious writings, especially his saints' lives. Thus, in 2006, Fiona Somerset urged scholars to look across Lydgate's immense and diverse oeuvre, arguing that 'Lydgate's hagiographical writings are a particularly fertile ground for such cross-comparison'.¹ Jennifer Sisk, taking up that invitation in 2010, writes about *St Edmund and St Fremund* (c. 1433) that it 'modulates in and out of multiple hagiographic modes' and is 'influenced and complicated by other genres'. She sees it as 'hagiography ... but ... hagiography with a difference'.² And, also in 2010, Robert Meyer-Lee, discussing the *Life of Our Lady* (c. 1416), argues that Lydgate uses the Marian narrative to fuse the poetic and the sacral: 'the literary becomes one and the same as orthodoxy', with the presiding 'genius' of the poet – now 'a saint of the realm of vernacular writing'.³ In this chapter, I will be adding to the work of critics such as Sisk and Meyer-Lee, by showing how Lydgate articulates a 'saintly poetics' in his latest, indeed last, saint's legend: the verse life of *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus* (1439).⁴

Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus (SSAA) has not attracted much critical attention since Derek Pearsall's scathing assessment of it as 'inflated', 'pretentious', and marked by a 'repetitiveness so limp and so pointless as to be noticeable even in Lydgate'.⁵ Yet the work's editor, George F. Reinecke, calls it 'the longest and most ambitious of his saints' legends', with the exception of *Life of Our Lady*.⁶ Commissioned by John Whethamstede, Abbot of St Albans, who was part of the learned circle around Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, SSAA was, as Alexandra Gillespie notes, 'the last edition of a life by Lydgate printed in the early modern

period – and one of the last books produced by a printer to a monastery'.⁷ It was, furthermore, 'the only vernacular *vita* of a saint to be printed in England between 1534 and the accession of Mary', and 'the only text printed that was actually ascribed to the Bury monk ... in this period'.⁸ These facts are interesting for a consideration of literary history, for they show how this particular saint's life was affected by the violent erasure of the cult of the saints during the Reformation, which included the displacement of hagiographic literature. This displacement has famously been termed – as several contributors to this volume point out – 'the passion of secularization' by Julia Reinhard Lupton.⁹ Part of this process was, as James Simpson in particular has shown, the establishing of Lydgate's 'negative exemplarity' – that is, his close association with a rejected medieval past, which in turn initiated a long-lasting critical devaluation of Lydgate's writings.¹⁰

SSAA tells of the martyrdom of the two eponymous British saints in three books, the first of which focuses on their lives as young men in Rome. Albon, the more worldly of the two, becomes one of Diocletian's 'knights'; Amphibalus, more scholarly, is converted to Christianity. In Book 2, and back in 'Britis Albion', Albon is converted by Amphibalus and suffers martyrdom; the final book deals with Amphibalus' passion and the deaths of those he has converted. The poem is 4,621 lines long, and the following discussion of it is by no means exhaustive. Focusing on three features of the *life* – its engagement with the discourse of laureation, its treatment of 'colours', and its temporal manoeuvres – will highlight the intricate associations that Lydgate builds up both inter- and intratextually in order to articulate a 'saintly poetics'. While the tropes he draws on are familiar from his other, especially also his secular, works, the hagiographic genre and saintly subject matter imbue them with new meaning.

The discourse of laureation is one that Lydgate draws on frequently, and in a wide range of his works, both religious and secular.¹¹ The laurel is invoked most commonly either as a noun (the 'laurer'), or as an adjective describing a particular kind of discourse ('langage laureate') or deed (chivalric or saintly).¹² It is a motif that allows Lydgate both to negotiate different kinds of actors and actions (which are shown to deserve this sign of distinction) and to explore the role of the poet and poetic language.¹³ Thus, in *Troy Book*, his translation and adaptation of Guido delle Colonne's history of Troy, Lydgate identifies those who lived in the past and committed heroic achievements as deserving 'þe

laurer grene for fyn of her labour'.¹⁴ In *SSAA*, it is for his steadfast suffering that the saint will be allowed to reside in heaven, 'with laurer crowned' (2.2055).¹⁵ By toiling away at their writing, we are told in *Fall of Princes*, poets, too, can win '[a] name eternal, the laurer whan thei wan'.¹⁶ While the laurel, then, distinguishes and commemorates all to whom it is granted, it is granted to different actors for accomplishments appropriate to their station, or their calling. The laurel can therefore be associated with figures from the distant, pre-Christian past (such as Hector or Virgil), as well as with much more recent ones (such as Henry V, or Petrarch). That it can function as a mark of distinction in a wide range of narratives is suggested in the Epilogue to Book 1 of *SSAA*. Here Lydgate interrupts the story leading up to Albon's conversion in order to praise John Whethamstede. Whethamstede is presented to the readers as a 'clerk notable' (1.885), whose virtue is made evident in his ceaseless search for 'greyn' with which to 'stuffyn his garneer' (1.889). The fruit of this intellectual labour is a book, the 'famous *Garnarie* / A book compiled, richer than gold in coffris' (1.894–5). In it is contained the wisdom of 'many olde poete' and the 'rethoriques swete / Of philosophres' (1.900, 901–2). It is, in short, a 'laureat repertorie' (1.903). What makes it such seems to be a combination of the book's worthy content (the skilful writings of poets and philosophers) and the virtuous, discerning nature of the compiler, Whethamstede, himself. Although Lydgate does not go on to push the point home, it does not require a huge leap of the imagination to see that this might reflect positively back onto his own poetic endeavour in composing this saint's life.

The laurel is, as noted above, both a mark of distinction and a marker of memory – and this, as the example of Whethamstede shows, is where poets in particular come into their own, for they can ensure that the memory of great deeds, as well of great writers, will be carried into the present and future. Had learned men not striven to set things 'in memorie', both 'lettris aureat' and 'palme laureat' would have been 'diffaced' (*Troy Book*, Prol. 216, 211, 212). All of Lydgate's works, religious and secular, participate in such acts of commemoration; it is therefore unsurprising that some of the same tropes and concerns resonate across them.

Poets, conquerors, and saints are connected to one another in multiple ways: not only can each of them strive to win a laurel for their specific achievements, but each can also facilitate the other in that venture. Conquerors (like Hector, or Henry V) perform noble deeds which provide suitable matter for the skilled eloquence of

poets. Saints – who are sometimes also kings – also provide matter for poets. Kings can act as the worldly patrons of poets, saints as their religious guardians. Both kings and saints (though in different ways) are granted an ‘afterlife’ by the poet. As is noted in *Fall of Princes*:

Wrytyng is cause that herto is remembrid
 Lyf of prophetis & patriarches olde,
 How thapostlis and martirs wer dismembrid
 For Cristes feith, his baner up to holde.¹⁷

The lasting fame promised by the laurel is finally only guaranteed by written support, something which seems to be as true of the deeds of classical heroes as of ‘apostlis and martirs’, at least on earth. Writing is shown to be inseparable from God’s grace in *Fall of Princes*, for it was gifted to humans by him as an aid against ‘the dulnesse of our infirmyte’. Writing will ‘enlumyne’ the world ‘be crafft of eloquence’ (4.29–31). It is not surprising, then, that Lydgate imagines saints and poets as cohabitantes in the ‘House of Fame’ in a number of his works, or that poets are figured as pilgrims – not just because of their devotion to the saints, but because writing, too, is a form of ‘labour’, leaving poets ‘[h]ot and drie [&] wery’ (*Fall of Princes*, 3.3).¹⁸

Poets draw inspiration for their important work from a wide range of sources, including for example the muses, classical as well as modern poets, the Virgin Mary, and the saints.¹⁹ In *Troy Book*, Lydgate asks a whole range of figures – Othea, Clio, Mars, Calliope – to ‘directe’ his ‘stile’ (Prol. 29), and donate their ‘golde dewe’ (Prol. 55) to help him with his ‘bareyn’ (Prol. 31) rhetoric. And it is not just in the secular works that Lydgate asks the Muses for inspiration. In his ‘Ballade at the Reverence of Our Lady, Qwene of Mercy’, for instance, he invokes Clio’s aid for his enterprise even as he sets this poem against the ‘thowsand storiis’ written by ‘olde poetis’.²⁰ In *SSAA*, the relationship of the poet to his sources of inspiration is a complex combination (not unusual in Lydgate’s writing) of humility and assertion. Yet the subject matter does seem to allow Lydgate to explore a different kind of stance towards those sources. While in other texts, such as *Troy Book*, Lydgate spends considerable time discussing this relationship at the outset, in *SSAA* he concentrates instead on the saint, barely mentioning his debt to a source at all. He also disavows any connection or association with other poets, past and present: he is not ‘acqueyntid with’ either the ‘musis of Maro’ (1.7), or with

Lucan or Virgil's 'metris' (1.8). The 'sugrid ditees' of Cicero and the 'fressh stile' of Homer are also unknown to him (1.8–14).²¹ Indeed, he is too 'crokid' to climb over that 'high ... stile' and cannot hope to follow the 'steppis aureat' of Petrarch, the 'poete laureat' (1.12–14).²² Having thus distanced himself from a poetic lineage, Lydgate goes on to tell us that Albon, that hero of faith, won a 'laureat crowne' for his martyrdom (1.85–91). The 'poetic' laurel thus seems to be eschewed in favour of the 'saintly' laurel – even as the hagiographer's voice requires such a disavowal for its emergence. Later on, in the transition from Book 2 to Book 3, Lydgate includes a prayer (entitled the 'Oracio Translatoris') to Albon, humbly requesting that the 'blissid martir' (2.2053), '[w]ith laurer crowned' (2.2055), have compassion on his writing and offer him 'gracious support' (2.2059). While laurels have been shown to be appropriate both to poetic and to saintly endeavour, Lydgate here seems to be aligning himself firmly with the latter: his alleged ineptitude disqualifies him from any claim to poetic excellence, and thereby from the company of excellent poets past and present, but he can hope for the 'support' of one who has also won a laurel – the saint himself. What the saint allows Lydgate to do is both to become the poet he claims not to be (what is not possible, with the saint's guidance?) *and* to free himself from having to follow in any poetic predecessor's 'steppis aureat'. The saint, that is, gives him access to a laurel that can be linked to the poetic but, to borrow Sisk's words, 'with a difference'. Lydgate's poem about the saint performs this poetic claim to the saint's laurel, even as it ensures that the saint's laurel is remembered; in this way, the engagement between poet and saint forms a virtuous circle. The laurel that emerges out of this encounter is a shared one – both saint and poet contribute to, and benefit from, it.

Lydgate's *SSAA* recalls and celebrates the saint's achievements, which result in the latter's heavenly laurel; the poem also acts as a guarantor of that laurel's on-going worldly renown, while drawing authority and approbation for its poetic endeavour from it. The poet-hagiographer can thus access the particularities of each kind of laurel available to kings, saints, and other poets while his association with the saint also sets him apart. Despite Lydgate's assertions here of inadequacy in relation to famous poets past and present, pagan and Christian, his connection to the saint, made manifest in the poem we are reading, positions him favourably in relation to them. He may not be like Virgil, Cicero, or Petrarch, but his graceful relationship to his 'matter' – which is both spiritual and poetic

– ensures that he remains in proximity to other poets while simultaneously being able to stake a claim for an equally skilful, if different, kind of poetics. In this context, Lydgate's concern with literary 'craft' emerges as absolutely central to his treatment of sanctity; indeed, sanctity and poetry can help each other in achieving a 'laurel'.

Sanctity is used quite explicitly by Lydgate to authorise and shape his poetic endeavour. *SSAA* is presented at its close as a translation of an anonymous compilation (3.1303–5) – yet it is the lives of the saints of whom the poem treats and to whom it is dedicated that shape and structure its development. In the Epilogue to Book 1, for instance, we are told that the account of Amphibalus' fate that we have been reading must now be interrupted so that the narrative can turn to Albon's conversion. The transformation that is signalled by the topic of conversion becomes both subject and form of Lydgate's poem, as he prays that the holy martyr may 'direct ... my stile' (1.880). The unfolding of the conversion narrative, it is claimed, determines the poem not just on the level of content, as its subject, but also in terms of its rhetoric – Lydgate's 'stile'. The saintly ghost-writer who thus guides the poet's 'stile' recalls the poem's opening claim, that Lydgate is too 'crokid' to climb over the 'high ... stile' of famous poets. The saintly influence helps him overcome this 'crookedness', indicating a personal transformation that is also a poetic one. In *SSAA*, then, the account of Albon's conversion from virtuous pagan knight to exemplary Christian saint can also be read as a figure for the process of a hagiographical poetics: as a commentary on how the master artificer, not unlike God and like a religious convert, '[m]ay chaunge and turne bi good discrecioun / Shappis, formys, and newli hem deuyse' (*Fall of Princes*, 1.10–11). One of the ways in which this poetic transformation occurs is exemplified by the poem's treatment of colours.

The particular qualities of a saintly poetic 'stile' are explored and developed throughout the poem, beginning with the familiar trope of self-deprecation discussed above. In the Prologue to Book 1, Lydgate asks St Albon to 'directe' his 'pennne', 'forther' his 'labour', and 'enlumyne' his 'langage' (1.58, 61, 96)²³ – for, without the saint's aid, he has 'no colours but oonli white and blak' (1.99).²⁴ More specifically, what he lacks is '[g]old', 'asur' and 'fressh vermilioun' (1.100). Denying that he has any access to such bright rhetorical 'colours' can, of course, be read either as a performance of the humility topos or as a covert claim to greater truthfulness.

His terms are not 'coloured' – that is, they may not dazzle, but they also do not blind, the reader. Again, as with the laurel, this trope's use in his other works resonates and underscores his meaning here. In *Troy Book*, for instance, we are told that Peleus' deceitful words, intended to lead Jason into deadly adventure, are characterised by 'a colour fresche of hewe' (1.379). Indeed, Peleus 'gan with asour & with golde to peynte / His gay wordys in sownynge glorious' (1.384–5). In Book 4 of the same text, it is said that even Homer's rhetorical skills cannot mask the viciousness of Achilles: 'Þou, Omer, maist with no colour, / þou3 þou peinte with gold & with a3our, / In þi writyng his venym nat enclose' (4.2983–5). Here, the coloured words provide a deceptively beautiful cover, at odds with the real depravity lurking behind them. An awareness of Lydgate's other works (or simply of the tradition of the critique of misleading rhetoric) serves to make the seeming insufficiency of a 'black-and-white' style preferable; however, Lydgate goes on to develop a more nuanced and subtle relationship to 'colour' in the poem than this opening dichotomy would suggest.

In *SSAA*, Albon is initially associated with red and white, two colours that symbolise, respectively, his passion and his purity (1.67–70). We are told that his colours 'did neuer fade' (1.71).²⁵ From the outset, then, Lydgate and Albon share white – and as white is explicitly linked with saintly purity, this already qualifies Lydgate's allegedly 'rude langage' (1.55). Yet Albon is then shown to have a close connection with these and other colours even *before* converting to Christianity. In Book 1, which tells of Albon's youth, Lydgate depicts in some detail Roman 'customs' of 'Antiquyte' (1.351).²⁶ One custom to which Lydgate pays particular attention is a knighting ritual, in which Albon participates, and which is described in a 'vastly expanded' passage.²⁷ The knights-to-be are bathed before they make their profession to Mars and Diana. After this, they are clothed in a white shirt and red mantle. They must swear to four things that make up the 'rihtis of their panyne lawe' (1.567): to protect their gods and temples; to uphold the law; to protect widows and maidens and punish thieves and tyrants; and never to bear arms against Rome (1.568–81). We are told that the bath signifies 'clennesse' (1.448), specifically moral purity, which includes virtues such as sobriety, temperance, honesty, and chastity. The white shirt stands for 'meekenesse' (1.481), purity of intention, and prudence; the mantle, of 'Martis colour' (1.525), symbolises 'high prowess' (1.533) and self-sacrifice. Finally, the knights wear spurs, whose golden colour signals that 'worship to

knythod is cheef guyde' (1.563). As one of these young knights, Albon is associated with white, red, and gold – colours which link him to pagan gods, to Roman custom, but also to specific moral virtues.

In another lengthy description of Albon's 'knyhtly prowes' (1.636), colours come to the fore again. We are told that the 'armys in his sheeld' depict a field '[o]f fine asur' within which is displayed a golden 'sawtre' (1.636, 638, 640, 641). The symbolic meanings of these colours are also explained: azure 'tokenyth stabilnesse', while the golden saltire indicates 'perfitnesse' (1.666, 669).²⁸ Gold is furthermore associated in the poem with the 'trumpet of the Hous of Fame' (1.15), which 'blowe ful fer the knyhtly mannys name' (1.17), as well as with Albon's 'laureat' crown in heaven (1.90).²⁹ Lydgate, then, claims to lack colours with which Albon is most closely associated: gold, azure, vermillion.³⁰ Although, in Book 1, Albon has not yet converted to Christianity, his 'colours' indicate his suitability for conversion, for he possesses the virtues that distinguish him as eminently convertible. Furthermore, the colours associated with Albon carry over from his pre- to his post-conversion self; indeed, they seem both to signify and to ensure that transformation. What happens to the colours in this process is not so much a redefinition as a recalibration: the 'natural' virtues that the colours signify, confirmed and codified by Roman 'custom', carry over and are arguably made more vibrant and lasting because they now find their true home and fullest expression in Christianity.³¹

Colours create further associations within the narrative, for they link Albon to another important figure: King Offa. Albon's arms are taken up by Offa, who in turn lays the first stone of the monastery dedicated to the saint in order to 'acquyte' (1.656) him for his support. These arms, left by Offa to the Church, become available to all Christians who have experienced wrong and seek redress: 'Bi thes armys ageyn that don hem wrong / With helpe of Albon thei shal be made strong' (1.664–5). As in the discussion of the laurel, above, we see here the mutually beneficial interaction between different kinds of men and times, in this instance linked not by the laurel but by the literal and figurative 'colours' of Albon. These colours connect saint, king, Church and fellow Christians, as well as different temporal moments in the development of a (Christian) nation. Lydgate, as a Christian, as an Englishman, and as a supplicant, can hope to partake of the 'colours' of Albon – the very colours he said he lacked – and their effect is twofold. These

colours, as the poem has explained, do not hide perfidy and they are not in themselves deceptive; wielded by the right person, they stand for moral rectitude and identify a man who is worthy of God's grace. They can be virtuous even outside of Christianity – but the 'logical' or 'natural' goal for their fullest expression is Christianity: it is then that the 'covering' most perfectly and truly matches the content. When Offa takes up Albon's arms – the arms that signal the latter's suitability for sanctity – he acts like an ideal Christian king; we can thus assume that when Lydgate prays to the saint to direct his 'stile', this means that he will write 'ideal' poetry – poetry that will tell us of the ideal colours of the saint while laying claim to those colours in their full glory.³² Saint, king, and poet are furthermore shown to be participants in a religious and national community whose successful (and 'correct') development they can, and must, further.

The colours appear again, at the end of the legend. This time they are associated with Edmund, that English king *and* saint of whom Lydgate had, of course, already composed a life in verse, and with whom Albon is now paired as guarantor of the nation's future:

As I trist, thes noble princes tweyn,
Edmond and Albon, thes martirs ioyned too,
Shal save this lond in what we have to do.

This kynges baner, of azeur is the feeld,
Ther-in of gold betyn crowns thre;
The same chaump berith Albon in his shield,
Bete in the myddis of gold a fresh sawtre.³³

The colours have moved from Albon's pagan past to colour Albion's Christian future. Lydgate's saintly poetics does not disdain 'colours' that might be associated with the past; it does not present itself as sealed off from the secular, or even from paganism. In *SSAA* Lydgate demonstrates that it is the *wielder* of those colours that matters: he can be either a Peleus or an Albon; a Homer or – perhaps even better, the poem implies – a Lydgate. And, by implication, the hagiographer's role is aligned with that of king and of saint; 'this lond' joins together those who ('we') are imagined as shaping its future. A saintly poetics commemorates, but with an eye on what is to come.

My argument thus far has shown how, in *SSAA*, Lydgate uses some very familiar tropes in order to articulate a distinctively saintly poetics. Its temporality is important, and both the laurel and the colours serve to stitch together different times, suggesting

continuity amidst violent religious and political change. Of course the idea that poetry can negotiate different times with the aim of providing political or ethical advice is neither new, nor is it unique to hagiography. Yet here Lydgate uses hagiography in order to claim a very specific and powerful kind of authority for the religious man of learning. That Lydgate is a poet of continuity has been argued persuasively by a number of scholars. In his essay on Lydgatean poetics, Larry Scanlon points out that the fact that 'aesthetic value' remains powerfully associated 'with the break, the new, the resistant, and the subversive' has posed problems for the reception of Lydgate's writing which, in contrast, is 'durative and radically diachronic'.³⁴ This assessment seems to be further supported by a consideration of this saint's life – and perhaps of Lydgate's religious writing more generally. In his *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (c. 1426–28), a translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's *La Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*, for instance, the figure of Hagiography explains her nature to the Pilgrim thus:

'I was not,' quod sche, 'sothe to say,
 Lyche the, borne vp-on a day,
 But by processe and leyser,
 And by space off many a 3er.'³⁵

She is like the Old Testament: '([c]laryffed by entendement) / Off the newe testament' (2.22323–4). Meaning develops, or reveals itself, over time: the past can be read through the lens of the present. As argued above, in Albon's case, the virtues that make him exemplary are already there before he converts. He himself is a product of an accumulation of historical moments:

His famous lyne doun descendid riht
 Fro the Romayns of old antiquyte:
 Bi comparisouns cronycles, who lyst, see
 The stok conveied of hym, that was so good,
 First from Troianys, and from the Romayn blood.³⁶

Diocletian's favourite, Albon is 'Mars in armys, with Mercury eloquent' (1.694), has 'with Ector magnanymyte' (2.1396), and is as '[s]ad as Scipioun' (2.1398). Yet this glance backwards is followed immediately by a moment of prolepsis, for the story jumps straight to events that have yet to happen within the chronological order of the narrative, with the narrator remarking that 'Verolamye, that famous olde cite, / May weel reioissh, renewid ever i-liche, / With his reliques that thei be made so riche' (2.1399–401). With

this 'history' an integral part of his being, Albon's conversion to Christianity is understood as a transformation, rather than as an erasure of the past.

What is important here is that the figure who makes this temporal process possible is Saint Amphibalus; while Albon is very much the central figure of the narrative, it becomes evident that the catalyst for his conversion and subsequent saintly career is his scholarly friend. The son of a Welsh prince, Amphibalus is blessed by Nature in his appearance and supersedes others in his 'techyng and gracious disciplyne' (1.47). In particular, he is rhetorically skilled: 'To alle language his tonge was i-fyled' (1.252). These qualities seem to lead to his earlier conversion and are also shown to be crucial for the conversion of others; faith having 'forgid' his 'ymage' of 'steale' (3.961), he is 'set vp for a sygne' (3.926).³⁷ At the end of his passion, when his body has been utterly broken, what lies revealed for all to see is his essence: 'Previd that day in Brutis Albioun / Was Amphibalus, with whom ... / Was nothyng left but only tong and herte' (3.950–2).

It is his learning and his knowledge of old stories that enable Amphibalus to find the means of helping Albon understand the vision he has had. For even though Albon has been shown to be a man of outstanding natural virtue, he does not comprehend what it is he has seen in those '[d]yvers mervayles vncouth straunge and newe', and beseeches Amphibalus to 'declar the exposicioun' of his 'avisoun' (2.459, 462, 463). It is Amphabilus, then, that erudite man of religion, who translates the evidence of God's grace into a text that Albon can read. He does so by drawing on terms and stories that are familiar to Albon: that is, he 'moralises' classical stories. Christ, like Orpheus, '[m]ade Cerberus to levyn his berkyng', saving humanity from death, just as the latter 'fett Eridice his wiff' from the underworld (2.628, 630); Christ is 'our Hercules in prowess' (2.636), a veritable 'Atlas' (2.585) holding up the heavens. Although this is a textual strategy that would have been familiar to a late medieval audience, the dynamics work differently intratextually. Whereas the readers of this life are likely to see Christian truth elucidating classical myth, for Albon it is the other way round: it is the classical references that allow him to enter into an understanding of this 'straunge and newe' belief. Amphibalus is able to connect the two frameworks meaningfully, so that Albon, shaped so decisively by Roman culture, can 'see', but the former can only do this both because he is divinely inspired and because he is well-versed in old stories. Pagan mythology, in

the hands of a Christian man of religion, becomes the key tool in bringing Albon's conversion to fruition. Having already crossed the threshold of conversion, Amphibalus is temporally skilled: he understands how to address Albon's pre-Christian way of seeing. Without Amphibalus, the poem implies, Albon's vision would be too 'straunge and newe' to be comprehensible and assimilable; the moralising strategy is shown to work both ways, even if the desired and ultimate goal is Christian insight.

Yet while this, too, supports a reading of Lydgate as a poet of continuity, there is an alternative temporal dynamic that emerges within the narrative: one of rupture. Although Amphibalus' explanation of Albon's vision relies on references to classical myth, the ensuing conversion leads to revolutionary events: Albon's life changes dramatically; his identity is radically resignified. Conversion is, to an extent, depicted as a transformation rooted in continuity (there has to be something in the individual to be worthy of conversion), but it also demands the violence that characterises new beginnings. As Amphibalus explains to his interrogators when he is accused of having insulted their 'lawis old' (3.207):

Favour of blood, nor non alliaunce,
Cherisshyng of tresour, nor promysse of kynrede,
Expert kynreede, nor non old acqueyntaunce,
Fayre be-hestis, manasse, nor haterede,
Al sett a-side, bothe love and drede,
The feith of Crist of hool hert we have take[.]³⁸

Nothing can move the true Christian – not the claims of kin or of political alliance, not the blandishments of wealth or the promises and threats of love and fear. All worldly bonds and affections are discredited; the Christian brushes off all 'old' claims and behaviours. It is not surprising that the 'paynymes' respond to such revolutionary assertions with acts of calamitous violence.

The emphasis on rupture rather than continuity becomes most visible in the poem's changing treatment of the term 'custom'. While Book 1, as argued above, presents pagan Roman customs as admirable and familiar, in Book 2, concerned with stories of conversion, sanctity and martyrdom in Britain, pagan customs and beliefs are referred to as 'superstition' (2.906). When the word 'custom' is still used, it refers much more narrowly and specifically to Albon himself (see, for instance, 2.142–5; 2.160–2): he emerges as the sole acceptable representative of past practices as he enters a new dispensation. In Books 2 and 3, pagans not only become aligned

with 'superstition' rather than custom, they are simultaneously and insistently associated with the 'old', as that term takes on pejorative meaning. Thus, for instance, they are said to be driven by their 'alder siht' (2.965); paganism is an 'errour of old vanyte' (3.1087). Refusing to convert, they are 'folwyng ther old avis' (2.1853); when some of them do convert, they themselves begin to 'dampne al sich old errour', turn away '[f]rom rihtis and cerymonyes old', reject their 'conswet rudnesse', their 'old ydolatrye', 'old vanyte', and 'old malis' (3.50, 64, 67, 69, 119, 785).

In contrast, Christianity is emphatically new.³⁹ As mentioned above, Albon asks Amphibalus to explain the 'straunge and newe' (2.459) sights he has witnessed in the night. But even before that, when Amphibalus first tells him about Christ, he exclaims: "'This sone of God! A straunge thyng and newel!"' (2.193). Those who do convert to Christianity are described as a 'newe peeple' (3.115), following their 'newe prechour' (3.135). The 'new doctrine' (3.185) has entered their hearts as a 'new opynyoun' (3.788). The sanctity of both Albon and Amphibalus is confirmed by 'myraclis new and newe' (3.83) and Verolamium, that 'famous old cite' is said to be ever 'renewid' through the relics of St Albon (2.1399–401).

As Lydgate comments in his long paeon to the Virgin Mary, the *Life of Our Lady*: '[O]lde custome is harde to putte away / And usage grevythe folkes ful sore / To do away that thei have kepte of yore'.⁴⁰ Yet while there is a clear indication in *SSAA* of the importance of what one might call a 'cumulative' poetics, which draws on modes of comparison, transformation, and fulfilment, Christianity, manifested and confirmed by sanctity, also allows Lydgate to valorise the new. This is relevant for a consideration of Lydgate's 'saintly' poetics.

In his essay 'Monastic Productions', Christopher Cannon argues that it was Lydgate's prescience and relentless modernity as a writer that contributed to the dissolution of a context in which 'valued' monastic genres – such as hagiography – were produced. Cannon states that it is Lydgate's 'laureate' view of literary history, his insistence on a distinguished lineage of named poets, that leads to a situation in which such genres would become the '*dissecta membra* that the Lydgatian view of history had already made them'.⁴¹ In *SSAA* Lydgate certainly shows himself to be puzzled by the anonymity of the compiler of his Latin source: 'Yit list he nat, I suppose, of meekenesse, / Telle wat he waas nor his name expresse' (3.1308–9). Lydgate's tone here is one of bemusement ('I suppose'), and even if the motivation for anonymity is laudable,

there is no sense that Lydgate feels he ought to follow in his predecessor's footsteps, or that he considers it an appropriate contemporary authorial practice. In fact, the previous author's anonymity seems to offer Lydgate more space to make the narrative his own – that is, to 'renew' it. In this instance, the *lack* of a named authority means Lydgate can foreground more effectively his own role and his own version of the saints' lives. The fact that there is an authorised source text lingering in the background remains important, for it validates the narrative's historical authenticity. Furthermore, the original author's successful attempt to have his account validated by the Church adds the seal of religious approval. Nonetheless, the source text is hardly ever referred to by Lydgate, and while this elision cannot be called a 'rupture', it does mean that Lydgate's poem points back almost entirely to himself as its creator – through the mediating influence of the saint.⁴²

In the *Life of Our Lady*, Lydgate breaks out of his narrative as he builds up to the poem's highlight – the incarnation of Christ – in order to lament his stylistic inadequacies. He recalls 'petrak Fraunces', 'Tullyus', and, of course, 'maister Chauser', praising their superior 'poetrye' (Part 2, at pp. 425, 426). In his excellent article on the 'emergence of the literary' in this poem, Robert Meyer-Lee agrees with other scholars that this enumeration of literary predecessors is a 'tacit but relatively obvious claim to poetic inheritance', and concludes that Chaucer is here 'figure[d] ... as a saint', whose influence, alongside Mary's, inspires Lydgate in his endeavour.⁴³ There is, however, another way of reading this. All of the poets Lydgate mentions are 'dede' and 'passed into faate', including Chaucer, the first poet in Britain worthy of the laurel (Part 2, at pp. 425, 426).⁴⁴ This phrase, 'passed into faate', is also used in *Troy Book*, composed around the same time as *Life of Our Lady*. Here it refers to the subject matter of the poets of New Troy: the life and doings of old conquerors and heroes, performed '[o]r Parchas made hem passyn in-to fate' (2.876). These worthy men, like the worthy poets, are now dead and past. In *Life of Our Lady*, Lydgate goes on to emphasise that even though he needs Chaucer's help, he knows that it will not be forthcoming. *He*, however, can help Chaucer – by praying for him. Lydgate concludes: 'But for that he, ne may not me kenne / I can no more, but with all my myght / With all myne hert, and myne Inwarde sight / Pray for hym, that liethe nowe in his cheste' (Part 2, at p. 427). In a sense, then, Lydgate is distinguishing Chaucerian eloquence from the person, Chaucer; the 'golde dewe dropes, of speche and

eloquence' have been 'distill[ed] ... [i]nto our tunge' (Part 2, at p. 426), but that language is now for the living to use.

Dismissing summarily all of the literary predecessors whose absence he has just lamented with the abrupt assertion that he will 'leve all this', Lydgate turns instead to Mary. Earlier in the poem, it has been made clear that Mary instigated an 'ordre newe' (Part 1, at p. 292, 1.633); by aligning himself with Mary, and describing his predecessors as old, dead, and gone at this climactic moment in the narrative, Lydgate creates a new temporal space for his work – one in which the linguistic or rhetorical gains made by past writers live on, but are simultaneously also freed up, disconnected from the particularity of their human authors. The 'new' poet's worthiness is, in turn, shown to be guaranteed by an order that is both 'new' and eternal, and which provides a framework within which both modes – of continuity and of rupture – can be explored and made meaningful. It is not so much my point here that Lydgate is using hagiography to sanctify the poet, as Meyer-Lee argues, as that he uses the stability that hagiography permits in order to valorise the 'newness' of his articulation of sanctity, a sanctity that is also the sign of a poetic 'new order'. Privileging the power of the saint (or Christ, or Mary) makes possible an alteration to the genealogical requirements of *auctoritas*. Here, then, is a twist on Cannon's observation: Lydgate *does* in a sense break with past practice, but not simply in order to replace it with a lineage of named poets. Even as he names them, literary predecessors are themselves displaced by death and by the poet's more direct inspiration from the saint. As we saw earlier, *SSAA* presents the reader with the importance of lineage (Albon's descent goes back to Rome and Troy), as well as with the assertion that no 'old' bonds of kinship can tie the 'new' Christian. Lydgate, the hagiographer, engages with a language that has been shaped – but is not determined – by the past.

There has been a move recently to suggest that Lydgate's religious writing – especially his later works – evinces a growing disease on the monk's part with his earlier, secular works. Ruth Nisse, for instance, detects in his oeuvre a 'growing tension between courtly eloquence and contemplative silence' that manifests itself as a movement from the 'artistocratic masculine ideal of the "poet laureate"' to the "laureate marter".⁴⁵ For Nisse, it is not surprising that Lydgate should place 'the most pressure on the assumptions that underlie his literary affiliations' in his 'representations of martyrdom'.⁴⁶ In her reading of Lydgate's hagiography, the 'conflicting assumptions of poetry and hagiography' are kept 'in

dialogue'.⁴⁷ In this reading, the 'laurel' is finally reappropriated: it is granted primarily 'neither to Caesars nor poets but to Christian martyrs'.⁴⁸ The development of Lydgate from poet associated with one kind of 'laurel' to another culminates, for Nisse, in his *Testament*, where the poet 'fully enacts a monastic poetics of martyrdom', a kind of 'auto-hagiography'.⁴⁹ My argument here has been instead that Lydgate probes and draws on a range of possibilities opened up by the relationship between hagiography and other, especially also secular, genres: sometimes he emphasises a fertile cross-referencing between them, at other times he uses hagiography in order to make bolder claims for the (Christian) poet's authorial freedom. That is, Lydgate negotiates his hagiography in dialogue with other kinds of writing at the same time as he emphasises the new possibilities that writing about sanctity can open up to the poet. Writing hagiography allows him to draw on a range of historical moments and the diverse cultural legacies that inform Christianity on the one hand, but also to foreground its radical newness on the other. While this 'newness' might draw on the past, it is nevertheless associated also with rupture and change. In *SSAA*, Lydgate explores how hagiography is poetry with a difference: the difference of sanctity.

Notes

- 1 Fiona Somerset, "Hard is with seyntis for to make affray": Lydgate the "Poet-Propagandist" as Hagiographer', in Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 258–78, at p. 258.
- 2 Jennifer Sisk, 'Lydgate's Problematic Commission: A Legend of St Edmund for Henry VI', *Journal of English and German Philology* (2010), pp. 349–75, at pp. 350, 352, 374. She anchors her formalist argument in the work of, for instance, Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For the enduring tradition of generic cross-fertilisation in hagiography, see for instance Matthew Woodcock, 'Crossovers and Afterlife', in Sarah Salih (ed.), *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 141–56, esp. at pp. 141–2. On the 'hybrid nature' of Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, see Katherine K. O'Sullivan, 'John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*: Translation and Authority in Fifteenth-Century England', *Mediaevalia* 26.2 (2005), pp. 169–201. On Lydgate's innovative saints' lives, see also Karen A. Winstead, 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund

- and Alban: Martyrdom and Prudent Pollicie', *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994), pp. 221–41, and *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. pp. 116–61.
- 3 Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48, at p. 342.
 - 4 All citations will be from the following edition, and I will refer hereafter to the poem as *SSAA*: John Lydgate, *Saint Albion and Saint Amphibalus*, ed. George F. Reinecke, Garland Medieval Texts 11 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).
 - 5 Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 284. He judges *SSAA* to be 'much less successful than *St. Edmund*' (p. 284).
 - 6 Lydgate, *SSAA*, p. 6. While Pearsall argues that *SSAA* 'reads more like an inflated version of the orthodox type of legend than a genuine legend-epic' (*John Lydgate*, p. 284), Reinecke speaks of its 'markedly epic details and scope', as well as its large amount of 'mythological and historical allusion' ('Introduction', p. ix).
 - 7 Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 183–4. See also Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
 - 8 Gillespie, *Print Culture*, p. 185.
 - 9 Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. xxi.
 - 10 See James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution, The Oxford English Literary History, Vol. 2: 1350–1547* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. also pp. 47–50.
 - 11 This is well known; see for example Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, esp. pp. 161–91; Larry Scanlon, 'Lydgate's Poetics: Laureation and Domesticity in the *Temple of Glass*', in Scanlon and Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate*, pp. 61–97; Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. pp. 49–87.
 - 12 Thus, for example, in *Ss Edmund and Fremund* the saints' passions are described as 'laureat'; see Anthony Bale and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *John Lydgate's Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund and the Extra Miracles of St Edmund* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009), 1.143. Classical and vernacular writers, as well as men of religion, are capable of producing such laureate language.
 - 13 See also the *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. 'laureat(e)'. The entry shows that the term could refer either to being 'crowned with a laurel as a mark of poetic excellence', or to 'receiv[ing] the martyr's crown'.

- Lydgate's works, secular as well as religious, provide the bulk of examples given for the use of the term.
- 14 John Lydgate, *Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 97, 103, 106, 3 vols (London, 1906–10), at 2.872.
 - 15 In *Ss Edmund and Fremund*, Lydgate speaks more generally of 'Blissid martirs, with crownes laureat' (2.1805); in the 'Legend of Seynt Margarete', he writes of the virgin martyr that 'Thurgh her triumphe she gate the palme in heuene, / With laurer crowned above the sterres seuene', in Henry Noble MacCracken (ed.), *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part 1*, EETS E.S. 107 (London, 1911 (for 1910), pp. 173–92, ll. 41–2.
 - 16 John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 121, 122, 123, 124, 4 vols (London, 1924–7), at 4.65.
 - 17 Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, 4.43–6.
 - 18 For more on Lydgate's innovative treatment of the poet as one – socially and politically very important – kind of worker, see Lisa H. Cooper, *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), esp. pp. 164–74.
 - 19 On Lydgate's use of terms to describe poetic eloquence that 'draw together associations [from both] secular and religious contexts', see Lois A. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 24–6. On 'illumination' in Lydgate's writing more generally, see Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, pp. 58ff. As Meyer-Lee concludes: '[F]or Lydgate, poetry both divinely illuminates and is divinely illuminating' (p. 59).
 - 20 See 'Ballade at the Reverence of Our Lady, Qwene of Mercy', in MacCracken (ed.), *Minor Poems, Part 1*, pp. 254–60, ll. 1–2. As the muse of History, Clio (invoked in ll. 13–14) is presumably felt to be an appropriate choice for his subject matter.
 - 21 As Meyer-Lee points out, with reference to Rita Copeland and Lois Ebin, 'Lydgate's conception of "Retoryke" ... represents a thoroughgoing reinterpretation of Ciceronian rhetoric as, specifically, poetic eloquence'; see Meyer-Lee, 'Emergence of the Literary', p. 323.
 - 22 Lydgate borrows this pun from Chaucer's 'Squire's Tale' (V.105–6), where it is used to describe the speech of the 'strange knyght' who arrives on a 'steede of bras' (V.89, 81). Presumably Lydgate is suggesting that his narrative will be of quite a different kind from that of the Squire – this 'disavowal' can be read both as serious and as playful. See Lydgate, *SSAA*, p. 212, n. to 12.
 - 23 Ebin argues in relation to Lydgate's *Ss Edmund and Fremund* and *Life of Our Lady* that Lydgate refines Chaucer's use of the term 'enlummyne' to mean 'to inspire', in order to associate its 'broad connotation of spiritual inspiration' more explicitly with 'the poet's activity', and to 'link the poet's power to affect the audience with God's might'; see Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, pp. 23–34.

- 24 This is a common Lydgatean theme, found in both religious and secular works; see for instance *Troy Book* (3.550–64 or 5.100–1), the envoy to *Fall of Princes* (9.3397–400), the envoy to *Ss Edmund and Fremund* (3.3579), or the prologue to the 'Legend of Seynt Margarete' (ll. 3–4). In the epilogue to Book 1 of *SSAA*, Lydgate repeats this claim (1.928–9).
- 25 Lydgate associates other saints with white and red also – see for instance 'A Prayer to St Thomas of Canterbury', in MacCracken (ed.), *Minor Poems, Part 1*, pp. 140–3, ll. 17–32, and 'Legend of Seynt Margarete', l. 24.
- 26 The pagan Romans are described in admiring tones: their chosen leaders are 'iust and stable, / Manly of hert and of condicioun, / Sobre, nat hasty, feythful, honorable, / For comoun profit previd profitable' (1.408–11). On a recent discussion of Lydgate and the question of 'vernacular humanism', see Andrew Galloway, 'John Lydgate and the Origins of Vernacular Humanism', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107 (2008), pp. 445–71.
- 27 Lydgate, *SSAA*, p. 219. n. to 346–585. Reinecke notes that 'this elaborate ceremonial seems to have been derived from historic medieval rites'; see p. 220, n. to 435–539.
- 28 The colour azure, as well as being associated with the colours of rhetoric, is also, as the *Middle English Dictionary* notes, 'one of the five standard "colors" in coats of arms', and is 'usually matched with gold' (s.v. 'asur', 3[c]).
- 29 Gold is of course also closely linked with what is seen as Lydgate's definitive contribution to vernacular literariness: 'aureate' language. As Meyer-Lee shows, gold is central to Lydgate's literary claims in his *Life of Our Lady*, where it is associated with Mary's grace and, by extension, with Lydgate's poem; 'Emergence of the Literary', p. 329.
- 30 In *Troy Book*, Lydgate associates azure and vermilion with Chaucer's inimitable 'stile' (2.4714–9).
- 31 The prologue to Book 2 notes that there were virtuous Jews and pagans in the past, and defines virtue as a natural condition. Nature teaches virtue in accordance with reason; we can see how '[g]ood greyn from chaff among hem was concernyd' (2.21). See also *Troy Book*, Prologue, ll. 147–51. The use of this biblical and Augustinian metaphor (see Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17) is also found in other works by Lydgate, such as *Fall of Princes*, where it refers to the inventive ability of 'auctours': 'Thei may off new fynde and fantasie, / Out of old chaff trie out ful cleene corn' (1.23–4). In his religious writings, it is used by Lydgate frequently to refer to Christian martyrs: in the Prologue to *SSAA*, Albon's martyrdom is the event which allows the 'whete corn' to be 'tried' from 'the chaff' (l. 81); echoing the gospel of St John, Albon is described as '[g]reyn of this frument' (l. 83, see also John 12:24–5). Again, in the next stanza, Albon is described as

the 'chose greyn' that 'for Crist was mortified' (1.85). In his 'Prayer to St Thomas of Canterbury', the saint is described as the '[I]aureat martir the chose whete greyn; / Which from the chaff was tried out and pured' (ll. 49–50). For more on the use and meaning of this metaphor, see Jennifer Summit, "'Stable in study": Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and Duke Humphrey's Library', in Scanlon and Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate*, pp. 207–31, at p. 220, and Kathleen M. Ashley, 'Titivillus and the Battle of Words in *Mankind*', *Annuaire Mediaevale* 16 (1975), pp. 128–50, esp. p. 132.

- 32 A variation on this motif is also found in his 'Legend of Seynt Margarete' where, having claimed he has no colours 'tenbelisshe with my style' (l. 4), he nonetheless shows that the 'rude ... apparence' of such writing can contain great treasures – '[m]ater ... of grete intellygence' (ll. 6, 7): 'Ful ofte falleth, in this Chestys blake / Gold and perlys and stones of grete prys / Ben ylooke and into warde ytake' (ll. 8–10). This is a particularly apt image, since Margaret, closely associated with the pearl, is herself first contained within, and then bursts out of, the dragon's belly.
- 33 Lydgate, *SSAA*, 3.761–7.
- 34 Scanlon, 'Lydgate's Poetics', p. 64. This view of Lydgate as an innovative poet who is nonetheless deeply invested in continuity is echoed by Stephanie A. Viereck Gibbs Kamath who, in a recent essay on Lydgate's indebtedness to the allegorical mode of the *Roman de la Rose*, argues with reference to his secular works that he is championing 'vernacular art ... as classical art's peer and rival' – a claim that reveals once again Lydgate's 'obsessive re-engagement with the past' and demonstrates his 'intertextual and figurative strategies for envisioning the literary tradition'; see 'John Lydgate and the Curse of Genius', *Chaucer Review* 45.1 (2010), pp. 32–58, at pp. 57, 58. Lydgate offers us an 'English poetics as an integral renewal of the wider literary tradition, rather than an innovative rupture' (p. 53). On Lydgate as a 'reformist' rather than 'revolutionary' writer, see Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*.
- 35 John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS E.S. 77, 83, 92, 3 vols (London, 1899–1904), 2.22289–92.
- 36 Lydgate, *SSAA*, 2.1390–4.
- 37 This description of Amphibalus echoes the moment in Book 1 when (Roman) knighthood is called an 'ymage' (1.386) that encourages a martial code of conduct in which 'toonge and hert bi on accord shal drawe, / On ther promys stedefastly abyde' (1.428–9).
- 38 Lydgate, *SSAA*, 3.274–9.
- 39 There is biblical precedence for such a view in Ephesians 4:22–4. For a discussion of the ambivalence of 'the new' in medieval thought, see Beryl Smalley's 1975 essay, 'Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty,

- c. 1100–c. 1250', reprinted in James Muldoon (ed.), *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe. The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000–1500*, Vol. 10 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 11–29.
- 40 J.A. Lauritis, R.A. Klinefelter, and V.F. Gallagher (eds), *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady*, Duquesne Studies Philological Series 2 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1961), Part III, at p. 661. Available online at the University of Virginia Library: http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=chadwyck_ep/uvaGenText/tei/chep_1.1702.xml;chunk.id=d7;toc.depth=100;toc.id=d4;brand=default
- 41 Christopher Cannon, 'Monastic Productions', in David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 316–48, at p. 348.
- 42 Lydgate refers to a 'Cronicle' in which one can read of Albion's knight-ing in Rome in the Prologue, l. 19. Then again, in l. 38, he refers to 'myn auctor' in an aside, when relating that King Severus sent prince Bassian to Rome; then again, in l. 48, he mentions his 'auctour' when telling us that Albion was converted by Amphibalus. Each time, the 'auctour' is associated with a very specific piece of information – there is no overarching discussion of his source until the one found at the end of the narrative.
- 43 Meyer-Lee, 'Emergence of the Literary', pp. 326, 329.
- 44 Lydgate is of course here borrowing a phrase that Chaucer himself used to refer to Petrarch's death; see Scanlon, 'Lydgate's Poetics', p. 69.
- 45 See Ruth Nisse, "'Was it not Routhe to Se?'" Lydgate and the Styles of Martyrdom', in Scanlon and Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate*, pp. 279–98, at p. 282.
- 46 Nisse, "'Was it not Routhe to Se?'"', p. 282.
- 47 Nisse, "'Was it not Routhe to Se?'"', p. 287.
- 48 Nisse, "'Was it not Routhe to Se?'"', p. 288.
- 49 Nisse, "'Was it not Routhe to Se?'"', p. 289. W.H.E. Sweet argues that Lydgate was deeply ambivalent about his secular works, not being able to reconcile them with his religious calling: 'Lydgate felt a conflict between his Christian obligations and his obligations to fulfil the poetic demands made of him by his patrons'. In his later works, 'Lydgate himself refuses to square the aureate language of courtly poetry with his Christian convictions.' See W.H.E. Sweet, 'Lydgate's Retraction and "His Resorte to His Religyou"', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 343–59, at pp. 346, 350.

Narrating vernacular sanctity: the *Scottish Legendary* as a challenge to the 'literary turn' in fifteenth-century hagiography

Eva von Contzen

In the fifteenth century, it has been argued, hagiography underwent a 'turn to more "literary" saints' lives'.¹ This turn, which is characterised by a new depiction of saintly exemplarity and a new self-understanding among the authors of hagiographic writings, is said to have inaugurated the saint's life as a literary genre.² Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale* marks the turning point, although the change is fully realised half a century later only, in the saints' legends composed by John Lydgate, Osbern Bokenham, John Capgrave, and others. That there are discernible differences between a compilation such as the *South English Legendary* or the *Scottish Legendary* on the one hand and Lydgate's or Bokenham's hagiography on the other can hardly be doubted, but the nature and features of these differences require further attention. In what follows, I suggest that already by the late fourteenth century hagiography had become 'literary' in that saints' lives ceased to be primarily and ostensibly instructive and explored and developed sanctity through the subtle usage and exploitation of narrative strategies. The 'new literariness' of the fifteenth century can in fact be characterised as a departure from, perhaps even a break with, received techniques and strategies of hagiographic narration. The *Scottish Legendary* is a prime example of these. Contemporary with Chaucer, the Scottish compilation additionally provides an interesting point of comparison to the *Second Nun's Tale*. Before I turn to Chaucer, however, I begin with a comparison of Lydgate's hagiographic works and the *Scottish Legendary* in order to disclose the idiosyncrasies of the two approaches to hagiographic narration. The most prolific writer of the fifteenth century, Lydgate can be held responsible for introducing the new hagiographic style to a wide audience and provides a perfect counter-example to the Scottish compilation. Even though one should not overestimate Lydgate's role in shaping the shifts observable in the fifteenth century, it is true, as Christopher

Cannon notes, that ‘the very breadth of [his] career – what Derek Pearsall has called Lydgate’s “massive centralness” on the stage of English life – gave him unparalleled influence’³. One aspect of this influence concerns his reconfigurations of hagiographic writing. As Anke Bernau argues in [Chapter 8](#) of this volume, Lydgate developed what she aptly terms a ‘saintly poetics’, an intricate network of probing his literary claims through a discourse of laureation, the treatment of colours, and the negotiation of temporality. These features, I would argue, clearly demonstrate the poet’s acute awareness of the *formal* potential of hagiographic writing and hence bring to the fore the central loss or decline of hagiographic writing as a *narrative* genre in the fifteenth century.

What tends to be neglected by scholars but is central to the legends of the saints is the fact that they are narratives. To narrate a saint’s life essentially means to narrate sanctity, that is, to encode the miracle of God’s grace shown on earth within the parameters of story-telling. The holy is made fathomable and feasible in narrative clothing. Crucially, narrative texts are dynamic, transitory, and constantly changing *qua* their narrativity. Reading, listening to, or remembering a narrative involves spatial and temporal progression and the addition of new and further pieces of information as the narrative unfolds; hence, narratives defy stasis. To describe hagiographic narration in terms of ‘saintly exemplarity’ is therefore potentially misleading because it implies a stasis alien to narrative dynamics. Since exemplarity only emerges as one specific interpretation of the narrative performance of sanctity, it is the *result* of a narrative process and therefore static. Alternatively, we may focus on the narrative techniques that are used in order to create sanctity in the first place. In this context sanctity can be understood as the superordinate idea created by and transmitted through the dynamic processes of hagiographic narration.

In Lydgate’s hagiographic corpus, which comprises a number of shorter poems, such as *St Margaret*, *St Gyles*, and *St George*, and the longer double legends of *Ss Edmund and Fremund* and *Ss Albon and Amphibalus*, the dynamics of narration are systematically deemphasised and reduced. Instead, Lydgate highlights the poetic form of his hagiographic works and contributes to the depiction of sanctity on a different level – in Bernau’s terms, his ‘saintly poetics’. The rhetorical devices Lydgate relies on include an elevated, ‘epic’ style, the addition of prologues and epilogues, verbose dedications to patrons, elaborated metaphors, digressions, and nature descriptions.⁴ These features, however, are only loosely

connected to Lydgate's narrative technique and pertain to the overall frame and the stylistic embellishment of the saints' stories. The same could also be said about Lydgate's understanding of the task of the hagiographer, which is thematised in almost all of his legends. Typically, Lydgate declares his stylistic incapacity, which is characterised by a lack of 'rethorikes swete' (*Margaret*, l. 3) and any knowledge about great poets' writing (cf. *Albon*, ll. 8–14), as well as his alleged unfamiliarity with and even dread of calling upon the muses (cf. *Albon*, l. 5; *Edmund and Fremund*, ll. 10–11).⁵ Of course the knowledge he displays when referring to classical sources and authors undermines his claims of inability and unmasks the humility topos he employs. The role of the muses is transferred to the saints who are invoked as the poet's sources of inspiration: for instance, Margaret is called 'blysfyl lode-sterre' (l. 62) and asked to 'shede of grace the aureat lycoure / Into my penne' (ll. 55–6). In the legend of Edmund, five full stanzas invoke the martyr's help through his holy grace to inspire Lydgate's 'penne, encloied with rudnesse' (l. 126).⁶

Strikingly, Lydgate's invocations to the saints and his declarations of rhetorical incapacity are concerned predominantly with the style of the legends. Even the passage in Edmund 'that I nat erre in my translacion' (l. 125) follows from asking the saint 'my stile do so dresse' (l. 124). Potential mistakes in Lydgate's translation hence result from his rough style, not from unintentional misinterpretations of his sources. Lydgate indeed translates the legends rather faithfully: he takes the elements of the plot and the details of the storyline straight from his sources. He conceives of his achievement as poet primarily, if not exclusively, as mastering stylistic challenges, measured against classical authors as well as Chaucer and the employment of rhetorical embellishment.

The substitution of the saints for the muses is linked to their depiction in the legends and Lydgate's understanding of their sanctity. In fact, Lydgate does not 'narrate' sanctity in that he creates it through the narrative; he presupposes it from the start. He thus turns the narratives into a static commentary of what one may call an already finished portrait.⁷ Since the saints have proven to be powerful long before Lydgate's composition of his legends and can hence assist him in his purpose, Lydgate is not interested in exploring the dynamics of *how* the saints became sanctified. Rather, he regards the legends as constant and static reminders of their sanctity. Of course all saints' legends are 'static' in that the saint's sanctity is presupposed from the start; yet there is a crucial

difference between the largely anonymous vernacular legends in the fourteenth century and fifteenth-century hagiography. In the fourteenth century, the saint's holiness constitutes the hypothesis the legend seeks to confirm (even though the audience is well aware that it will always be confirmed). The prime means of this verification is the narrative development of the *vita* or *passio* in question. Lydgate, starting from the premise that the story is in no need of authorial confirmation, skips the process of verification and instead explores the hagiographic discourse as a platform for his self-fashioning. In other words, as content loses the necessity of confirmation, form takes precedence. The saints' holiness is made visible through their outward appearance, their attitude, and the outcome of their actions, which function as leitmotifs throughout the narratives. Already present in Lydgate's earlier hagiographic pieces, the emphasis put on the immutable perfection of the saints is increased in the later legends. George, for instance, sets out 'thoroughe his noblesse and his chyvallerye / Trouthe to sousteene' (ll. 31–2), and he is referred to as 'this mighty geant, Crystes chaumpyoun' (l. 183). Margaret is 'immutable in hir stablenesse' (l. 19), 'in al hir lyvyng prevyde vertuous' (l. 37), 'benyng and glad of chere / Flouryng in vertu, moste goodly and entere' (ll. 95–6), 'a mirrour of mekenesse' (l. 100), 'constaunt of herte' (l. 153), and 'in youthe flouryng and virginité' (l. 439). Edmund, who grows into an exceptional young man, is praised most exuberantly:

Sobre of his chier, void of al outrage,
 Demeur of port, angelik of visage,
 Most acceptable in euery mannys siht,
 For of his presence glad was euery wiht.⁸

Similar superlative descriptions occupy a significant amount of space in the legend. Immediately following the passage cited above, for instance, Lydgate devotes seven stanzas to the enumeration of young Edmund's outstanding qualities (cf. ll. 281–336). Further examples are interspersed throughout the legend: Edmund is 'in his estat most goodly and benygne, / Heuenly of cher, of counseil prouydent' (ll. 911–12), 'famous in al vertu, / Old of prudence, of yeris yong and greene' (ll. 981–2), 'stable and hool withynne his soule' (l. 1595), 'Cristes champioun' (l. 1598), and 'most pacient and most benigne of cheer' (l. 1640). Following the account of Edmund's coronation, Lydgate describes the saint's royal appearance and attitude once again in great detail

(ten stanzas). Here and in the other legends, the heavy use of the superlative brings to the fore the exceptionality of the saints who are beyond comparison.

Similarly, in those cases in which Lydgate does employ comparisons, especially in his later legends, the saints' exceptionality is emphasised by comparing them to several biblical and classical figures at once. Edmund's mother Siware, for instance, is

As Hester meek, Iudith in stabilnesse,
And in beut lik Dido of Cartage.
In wifly trouthe void of al outrage.

As Lucrece she was of herte stable.
In semlynnesse rassemblyng Bersabe.
Sobre of hir port, of wil nat variable.
Lik Marcia in wifly chastite.⁹

Although the names evoke stories connected to them, Lydgate uses them not as catalysts for narrative development but as products abstracted from their stories. The references function as symbols for one clearly defined point of comparison, such as meekness, stableness, beauty, seemliness, chastity, and grace. The fixedness of the character is strengthened by these comparisons, impeding the development of individual traits and also the exploitation of narrative dynamics.

The saints' holiness as an unalterable fact that precedes the narration and therefore renders narrative development unnecessary, is reflected in the distance Lydgate sets up between himself and his main characters. Whenever the saints are referred to within the legends, Lydgate adds either a qualifying title or adjective, a demonstrative pronoun, or even combines the two: 'this mayde' (l. 85), 'this holy virgyne' (l. 95), 'this cely innocent' (l. 119), 'this maide' (l. 481), all with reference to Margaret; 'hooly Seint George' (l. 99), 'this martyr' (l. 125), 'that Saint George' (ll. 155, 201); 'this holi Edmond' (l. 667), 'blissid Edmond' (ll. 774, 781), 'kyng Edmond' (l. 1401); and with respect to Albon, 'that knyghtly man' (l. 620), 'glorious seynt Albon' (l. 654), 'this blissid Albon' (l. 974). It has been argued that 'the demonstrative may be used to convey the narrator's attitude towards his material; depending on the context, it can suggest either engagement or detachment from the subject'.¹⁰ In Lydgate's case, the effect is clearly the latter: his references hyper-determine the saints and thereby detach them from 'their' narratives, and also from the poet. At the same time, the act of reference induced by the pronouns, adjectives, and titles

brings to the fore the teller of the tale who mediates the narrative to his audience.¹¹

The distance between Lydgate and his saints may indicate the poet's uneasiness with the double role the saints fulfil. On the one hand they are perfected, immutable intercessors in the world who can be prayed to and are perceived as holy subjects. On the other hand, they are quite different subjects in the sense of changeable agents within the narratives, where they may assume a quasi-independent existence. Lydgate draws on the former when he appeals to the saints as his source of inspiration, and tries to suppress the latter in shifting the parameters of narration from development and change to the description and statics of commenting on sanctity as an immutable state. In fact, Lydgate's technique of suppressing narrative development may be linked to the poet's fear of potentially weakening the saints' status as saints by allowing the narrative to evolve. Hagiographic narration is reinterpreted as eulogising sanctity, which becomes the superordinated term for the best possible character traits, attitudes, and actions. The legend of St Gyles epitomises this approach: here, Lydgate addresses the saint throughout in the second person and thus turns the narrative of the martyr's life and death into a hybrid of prayer and praise, thereby controlling the narrative in linking it inextricably with Gyles as intercessor and holy subject.¹²

For Lydgate, the saints as well-established figures of public and private devotion are incompatible with their depiction as characters created by and evolving within the dynamics of narration. His legends comment upon sanctity as an abstract concept in exuberantly verbalising the features associated with a saintly character. They describe devotional images that depict the saints with their attributes and take for granted the sanctity of the person shown in the image. That which is potentially contradictory or precarious is played down by the poet who exercises strict control over the narrative and foregrounds his poetic skills rather than the narrative process.

Quite a different picture of hagiographic narration emerges when we take a closer look at the *Scottish Legendary*. Written between 1371 and the turn of the century,¹³ the compilation comprises the lives of fifty saints and covers more than 30,000 lines. The *Scottish Legendary* is the second largest verse compilation of hagiographic material next to the *South English Legendary* and the only surviving example of vernacular hagiography of Scottish provenance. The text is extant in one manuscript and was composed

in the Scottish Lowlands by an anonymous cleric. According to the Prologue, the poet wants his audience to recognise and use the saints as mirrors for their own lives and to improve through their example.¹⁴

Of the saints used by Lydgate, only George and Margaret are included in the Scottish compilation and hence lend themselves to comparison. One aspect that immediately strikes the eye is the difference in scope: the legends in the Scottish compilation are much longer than Lydgate's. Lydgate's *George* comprises 230 lines, the version in the *Scottish Legendary* 956; Lydgate's *Margaret* is made up of 539 lines (including the seventy-seven lines of the prologue and the lenvoy of twenty-one lines), while the Scottish legend covers 729 lines in total.¹⁵ The difference in metre (the *Scottish Legendary* uses tetrameter throughout, Lydgate rhyme royal) cannot be held responsible for this discrepancy; rather, two very different narrative strategies lead to more and fewer words on the page.

Like Lydgate's *Margaret*, the legend of Margaret in the *Scottish Legendary* starts with an introductory passage (ll. 1–58). The poet explains the meaning of the saint's name based on the etymology provided in the *Legenda Aurea* and lists, closely following this source, Margaret's excellence: her humility, virginity, and virtue.¹⁶ Margaret is presented as a stock character, epitomising the saintly virgin in her stereotypic qualities. The introduction culminates in an account of the absence of any trace of the Seven Deadly Sins in Margaret:

for pride in hyre, na auarise
 herbryt in hyre mycht be na vise,
 na slawnes, na lychery,
 na wreth, na gnedschepe, na gluto[ny];
 bot hyre sa wisly can scho ware
 with almus, fasting, & prayere
 þat scho ourcom hyr fais fel[.]¹⁷

Thus the saint is firmly grounded within religious discourse and used as an example of positive character traits abstracted from any individual or specific context and actions. Apart from the fact that the hagiographer nowhere thematises his role or draws attention to himself and his writing, up to this point the Scottish version appears to be very similar to Lydgate's in its descriptions and praise of Margaret's sanctity. Yet the Scottish author uses the encomiastic elements to different ends. Immediately after the description cited above, the poet adds the following:

as in hyre story I herd tel,
 word be word, as teophinus,
 þat wrat hyre story, tellis vs.¹⁸

It becomes obvious that the summary of Margaret's saintly qualities serves the purpose of a hypothesis. The abstraction of the saint's actions and character rounds off the introductory passage and leads over to the narrative proper in which the saintly qualities are 'proven' – i.e., developed and made apparent through the depiction of the saint's life. Accordingly, the distinct features of Margaret's sanctity are implicit in the evolving narrative and can be deduced from the saint's actions and behaviour. In fact, Margaret's legend does not contain a single passage that explicitly mentions aspects of her sanctity unless they serve a clear narrative purpose. For instance, the saint's beauty is praised just before the episode relating how Olibrius sets his eyes on Margaret for the first time and desires to sleep with her:

nocht-þane scho wes of sik boute
 þat it wes wondir for to se;
 for farare thing mycht be nane
 in ony degre, in flesch or bane[.]¹⁹

At first sight the superlative praise of Margaret's beauty is similar to Lydgate's practise of eulogising the saint. Lydgate decides to present this particular scene by depicting Margaret's outward appearance not from the narrator's perspective but through Olibrius's eyes, drawing on the conventional discourse of courtly love:

He was ravesshede anoon with hir beauté,
 Hir grete fairnesse whan he dide adverte,
 Hir fresshe face eke whan he dide see;
 Hir heavenly iyen perced thurgh his herte,
 Brent in his corage with importable smerte.
 This cruel wolfe, for love inpacyent,
 Cast him devowre this cely innocent.²⁰

The adjective 'heavenly' in particular is ambiguous: a common phrase from a lover's point of view, it also highlights Margaret's status as saint and her participation in the heavenly community. Since the reader follows Olibrius's gaze, the two ways of perceiving Margaret's beauty remain unresolved next to one another and turn Margaret into a sexual object, a problematic since unintentional aspect of her sanctity. Here Lydgate's stylistic efforts undermine

his overall attempt to control the narrative even though the final line of the stanza tries to re-establish the more distanced perspective in referring to Margaret as 'this cely innocent'. Thus in a static, descriptive scene Lydgate's depiction renders Margaret precarious who, as a beautiful woman, arouses Olibrius's desires.

In the *Scottish Legendary*, by contrast, Margaret's integrity is preserved because the poet adds to the aforementioned reference to her beauty a crucial further detail:

bot 3et wes scho al-out fairare
thru treuthth scho had in cristis layre,
to quham scho pleyisit in al degre
of consciens thru fyne bewte.²¹

Margaret is so beautiful because the source of her beauty is her belief: Christian truth shines through her, mirroring her inner beauty in her outward appearance. Although the link between inner and outward beauty is a literary topos, the Scottish poet, by including the explanation, ensures that Margaret's attractiveness to Olibrius is double-layered and reflects the prefect's blindness to and desire for the Christian belief. Olibrius falls for Margaret because she stirs his sexual drives (cf. 'with ful wil of lychery', l. 116; 'with hyr fleschly for to syne', l. 124) but he does not realise that his desires are actually evoked as much by her inner beauty and her belief as by her outward attractiveness. Hence Olibrius's role and desires are complicated from the start and at the same time clear Margaret of any faults of her femininity.

Another example of how the *Scottish Legendary* directly attributes aspects of sanctity to the saint without simply eulogising her occurs in the first torture episode. Margaret is hung up by her feet which, in Lydgate, causes her body to be torn. Lydgate describes how the saint's blood is shed and the saint's body becomes drained:

The juge thanne upon a galowe tre
Lete hangen up this holy pure virgyne,
Hir flesshe be rente in his cruelté,
Whos blode ran doun right as eny lyne;
Lyke a quyke this mayden in hir pyne
Shad oute hir blode, hir veynes al torent,
Til of hir body the lycour was al spent.²²

In the Scottish version the torture is further brutalised because the tormentors chastise Margaret's body with 'schorgis' and do much more harm to it than in Lydgate's version:

þane wikit men þat madyn fare
 hangyt he vpe in þe ayre,
 & with schorgis fra tope to ta
 hyr far flesch raf, til al þai
 þat by stud mycht wele thru þe skine
 þe guttis se þat war þar-in.
 bot scho wes cled in haubersione
 of treuth & of deuocione[.]²³

As the tormentors shamelessly lay bare her intestines, Margaret's sanctity is the skin and clothing that keeps her integrity and honour intact. Instead of praising abstract qualities for the sake of encomia, the *Scottish Legendary* instrumentalises them. They become a metaphor to protect Margaret from humiliation and exalt her status in reinterpreting her as a literary, legible sign of holiness. The humiliation and the pain inflicted on Margaret's body recur in the second torture episode:

... hyre rybbis ware mad bare,
 & flayne of hyre sa wes þe skyn
 þat men mycht se hyr wame with-in.²⁴

Here not only her ribs are made visible, even her womb can be seen by the onlookers. The saint's innermost parts are turned inside out, and what is physically the most protected becomes exposed.

Margaret's sanctity is exemplified not by listing abstract qualities of holiness but by narrativising saintly behaviour that stresses the perversity of her situation and her outstanding character. Shortly before her death, when she is badly burned, her skin gives off sweet-smelling smoke. The poet conceptualises Margaret's body as a thanks offering made to God (cf. 'in plesand smelling of suetnes / & sacrifice, þat thankful wes', ll. 556–7), thus turning her into the subject and object of her own sacrifice at the same time and dissociating her from her body and earthly existence. This depiction of Margaret is the crescendo of narrating her sanctity in terms of increasingly violent episodes of torture. The gap between her steadfastness and firmness of belief and the pain she has to endure is widened to such a degree that two quite different individuals seem to be depicted rather than one and the same person. Such a gap cannot be described; it needs to be developed in order to reach its full impact. The Scottish poet takes advantage of the two Margarets inherent in her legend, the body that suffers and the soul that remains focused on God, by exploiting the evolution

of the narrative in his depiction of Margaret's sanctity through her suffering.

Another aspect in which the *Scottish Legendary* differs strongly from Lydgate's legend of Margaret is the employment of direct discourse. As in almost all virgin martyrs' legends, the saint is given a considerable amount of space to express herself, and both Lydgate and the Scottish version allow Margaret to speak, especially in her confrontations with Olibrius. Yet Lydgate's strategy of exercising control over his narrative also comes to the fore in his treatment and distribution of direct discourse: Margaret addresses Olibrius five times, thirty-four lines in total, while Olibrius directly talks to Margaret four times, forty lines altogether.²⁵ That the pagan opponent's verbal contributions exceed those of the saint is unusual and grants Olibrius a very prominent position in the legend. Lydgate appears to be more at ease in allowing Olibrius to talk than giving the floor to the saint. Margaret's narrative development is suppressed by confining her direct discourse to a brief communication of her opposition and the expression of her readiness to die for her belief. In contrast, in the *Scottish Legendary* Olibrius addresses Margaret four times (thirty-five lines), while Margaret speaks to the prefect six times. Her speeches cover more than one hundred lines, which is almost three times the amount of Olibrius's direct discourse. The Scottish version unequivocally privileges Margaret in her right to speak and allows her to be in control of the narrative discourse.

Lydgate's Margaret gets straight to the point in her first reply to Olibrius: she is a Christian and will not agree to give up her faith (ll. 157–61). It does not matter that Olibrius has not yet disclosed his anti-Christian attitude. Lydgate uses Margaret's words not to develop the narrative smoothly but to move to the next installation – to focus on the next detail in the picture – and this requires the confrontation about her religion. In the *Scottish Legendary*, the dialogue between the two evolves more coherently and allows Margaret to position herself clearly, and to develop individual characteristics. Her first reply to Olibrius's question ends with a straightforward rejection of his attempts to win her over: '& quhare þu wald I gaf consent / to syne with þe, þane ware I schent' (ll. 171–2). Only then does the discussion turn to her belief, and in the next three exchanges Margaret takes on the role of a preacher, expounding details of the Christian faith. Her first longer passage in particular is modelled on the Creed in the aspects she mentions (ll. 180–204). In what follows she explains the truth of Christianity

in contrast to the ‘mawmentis’ which are ‘dume & def & ma haf nane / pouare to mak ocht, for pai ar mad’ (ll. 248–9) before she stresses her fearlessness and steadfastness in not renouncing her belief. The scope and details of Margaret’s direct discourse in the *Scottish Legendary* provide a prime means of driving the narrative forward. At the same time they also set up the saint as co-narrator and grant her authority over her own story; she is given a voice that is overshadowed only by the presence of the hagiographic narrator.

If one compares Lydgate’s legend of George with the one in the *Scottish Legendary*, the distribution of direct discourse is even more conspicuous. The heated dialogue between Emperor Dacyan and George, in which George repeatedly refuses to sacrifice to the pagan gods, is spelled out in great detail in the Scottish version and contains several sub-plots with further dialogues, such as the dialogue between Dacyan and the sorcerer he hires to poison the saint and the confrontation between the emperor and his wife who converts to Christianity and also suffers martyrdom. These stories are treated in one stanza each in Lydgate (see ll. 183–9 and ll. 218–24), and George is granted just one line of direct discourse, addressed to Dacyan: “‘Oon God ther is, fy on ydolatrye” (l. 161). Similarly, the story of George’s victory over the fierce dragon is condensed to George’s encounter with the king’s daughter. The focus is on the result of George’s interference rather than on the development of the narrative. The latter, however, is exactly what the *Scottish Legendary* focuses on. Not only is the king’s despair about having to sacrifice his only child to the dragon recounted in detail (he says goodbye to the princess and laments her departure extensively), George and the princess also engage in a lively dialogue before the saint intervenes and saves the king’s daughter. George, like Margaret, drives his narrative forward through his direct discourse and detailed actions. Once again sanctity is created through the dynamics of narrative development and relies on the authority of the saint as the narrative agent.

The question of who has, and is allowed to have, authority within and beyond the narrative is closely linked to the question of sanctity and the divergent depiction of the concept in Lydgate and the Scottish compilation. In Lydgate, the poet draws on the saints as muses in order to be able to author and thereby authorise the saints through his poetic activity as a static, because resultative, exercise. Through his praise the poet reconfirms and reiterates their sanctity. This is also reflected in Lydgate’s treatment of the saints’ discourse with the divine. Only Margaret’s final prayer, and

only one part thereof, when she asks to be an intercessor for women in labour, is provided in direct discourse. Here Lydgate could hardly suppress Margaret's voice since he was writing the legend for Anne Mortimer, countess of March (d. 1432), who was young and therefore likely to have chosen Margaret precisely because of her special patronage in childbearing. The Scottish version, by contrast, emphasises Margaret's constant engagement with the divine and her reliance on prayers. Five prayers are included in the legend in which the saint expresses her faith, prays for steadfastness, asks for forgiveness for her tormentors, and rejects the idols.²⁶ The saint relies on divine authority, which in turn justifies the authority Margaret exerts over the narrative. The narrative epitomises and visualises this authority in the motif of the white dove, which appears several times in order to encourage the saint when she is in prison, is being tortured, and is awaiting her death.²⁷

In the *Scottish Legendary*, saintly authority, exemplarity, and sanctity are constantly negotiated and oscillate between the poet and his poetic voice *qua* the narrator and the saint as narrative agent and outspoken subject in control of her narrative and in submission to divine authority. Sanctity is depicted as dynamic, active, and resulting from practice rather than being an inborn, preconditioned, and therefore static quality of an individual. Margaret and George in the *Scottish Legendary* are not exceptional in that respect. All of the fifty legends in the compilation adhere to these principles of the narrative development of sanctity. The saints are given ample space to express themselves in direct discourse, and they are consistently depicted as narrative agents who act in words and deeds and develop their status of sainthood through their actions. Both Lydgate and the *Scottish Legendary* use the hagiographic narratives as vehicles of promotion but only in the latter case do they serve the depiction and construction of sanctity. In exploring and developing his role as author, Lydgate suppresses the narrative development of the saints, while the *Scottish Legendary* promotes the saints through their narratives by exploiting the flexible and transformative potential of narrative means.

The strategies of hagiographic narration in the *Scottish Legendary* ultimately shift and reform the didactic imperative of hagiography towards a greater liberty in how to respond to the stories. They allow the audience to draw their own conclusions about the saintly protagonists and facilitate affective responses as well as experiencing empathy, sympathy, and antipathy with the saints and their opponents because the narratives, and the saints

through their narratives, are made to speak for themselves. The Scottish poet's awareness of what narrative means can achieve, and his ability to use strategically and transform the well-known hagiographic narratives into a new reading experience can be seen as signs of the literariness prevalent towards the end of the fourteenth century.

This is where we have to direct our view to the south of Great Britain and to Chaucer: although there is no evidence that the Scottish author had any knowledge of Chaucer, or vice versa, the Prologue to the *Scottish Legendary* and the prologue to the *Second Nun's Tale* display striking similarities. Both authors use the idleness topos, drawing on the same distich by Cato, and refer to the *Roman de la Rose* before they turn to their hagiographic content in order to fight idleness through virtuous busy-ness.²⁸ Both texts link didactic functions with the enjoyment of the narrative development of sanctity. Perhaps not surprisingly, the *Second Nun's Tale* relies on the same narrative techniques as the *Scottish Legendary*. Cecile is a very outspoken virgin martyr, and her conversations with her husband Tiburce, Tiburce's brother Valerian, and Almachius carry much of the tale. Further narrative subtleties have been pointed out, all of which serve the development of Cecile's sanctity throughout the narrative, such as Cecile's strategies of dissent, the power of sight, and humorous moments throughout the tale.²⁹ Chaucer's indebtedness to contemporary practices of hagiography allows him to explore and negotiate various forms of authority, as Jennifer Sisk demonstrates in [Chapter 6](#) of this volume. He shows that more than other genres hagiography 'belongs' to no one but to Christian tradition and the saints themselves, a view that is reflected in his choice of the speaker. The often-noted absence of the Second Nun in the *General Prologue* is highly appropriate given the genre she recounts, the voice of which is predominantly anonymous and clerical.³⁰

Against this backdrop, it becomes highly questionable why one should regard Chaucer as the precursor of a trend fully realised in the fifteenth century. As we have seen, Chaucer does not inaugurate a new trend of hagiographic narration but appears to operate within parameters of saintly storytelling more widely used in the late fourteenth century. Perhaps it is the insertion of the overall frame – which invites a reading and interpretation of Cecilia's story in relation to the other pilgrims' tales – that is ultimately responsible for turning the tale into a literary piece, especially when hagiographic parameters of narration are transferred also to other,

non-hagiographic tales such as the *Physician's Tale* or the *Man of Law's Tale*.³¹ One may thus conclude that Chaucer has been misleadingly made the starting point for a new trend in hagiographic narration. The narrative of Cecile's martyrdom itself adheres to principles of developing her sanctity by letting her speak, act, and react, and thereby control her discourse in establishing her sainthood. These are exactly the narrative strategies we have observed in the legends of Margaret and George in the *Scottish Legendary*.

Half a century later, the narrative techniques used both by Chaucer and in the *Scottish Legendary* underwent a paradigm shift. They were replaced by the upcoming importance of the author and a new sense of literary history in which Lydgate situates himself prominently.³² Lydgate instrumentalises sanctity as a product: his legends, as commissioned pieces, use sanctity as a means to promote Lydgate as author and poet, and deemphasise, to the point of omitting them altogether, the subtleties and implicitness of Chaucer's and the Scottish poet's narrative techniques. Narrative development and the saints' outspokenness are replaced by classical allusions and authorial self-referentiality. The rhetorical additions, though meaningful in themselves, are 'empty' for the narrative development and carry little, even no function for the hagiographic plot, which therefore often appears to be colourless.³³ Put provocatively, the power of the text and its narrative strategies – through which the author only indirectly wields his power – is replaced by the power of the author's name and fame, and his identification of the text as a product in time and space.

In the late fourteenth century, hagiographic narration reached a peak in its strategies of vernacular sanctity, strategies that were superseded half a century later by strategies of poetic exploration, and, one may tentatively argue, the absence of which played its part in the subsequent death of the genre. In fact, William Caxton's influential translation of the *Golden Legend*, published in 1483, marked a return to a much earlier stage of hagiography, characterised by a condensation of the narratives and reduction to the main plot elements, and thus reintroduced straightforward didactic purposes in the depiction of the saints. Reading the legends as narratives has revealed the subtle strategies in the narration of sanctity and forces us to rethink our conceptions of the development of medieval hagiography and its place in literary history. The crucial point is the depiction and understanding of sanctity, which can generate narrative development, grant authority to the saints as narrative agents, facilitate the creation of individual voices, but also

suppress narrative development, silence holy men and women, and subordinate their actions to the stylistic endeavours of the poet.

Notes

- 1 Karen A. Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 335–51, at p. 338.
- 2 Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', p. 338.
- 3 Christopher Cannon, 'Monastic Productions', in David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 316–48, at p. 341. Derek Pearsall's quote is taken from his monograph *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 298.
- 4 Cf. e.g. John Lydgate, *Saint Alban and Saint Amphibalus*, ed. George F. Reinecke, Garland Medieval Texts 11 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), at pp. ix–x; John Lydgate, *The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. J.E. van der Westhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 23, 65–73; E. Gordon Whatley, Anne B. Thompson, and Robert K. Upchurch (eds), 'Saint Austin at Compton (c. 1420–40), by John Lydgate', in *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), pp. 213–51, at pp. 220–2; Anthony Bale and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *John Lydgate's Lives of St Edmund & Fremund and the Extra Miracles of St Edmund* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009), pp. 18–24. See also Winstead, 'Saintly Exemplarity', p. 338; and James I. Miller, 'Lydgate the Hagiographer as Literary Artist', in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Learned and the Lewed. Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, Harvard English Studies 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 279–90, at p. 290. On the importance of patronage culture in the fifteenth century, see David Lawton, 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century', *English Literary History* 54.4 (1987), pp. 761–99; and Claire Sponsler, 'Lydgate and London's Public Culture', in Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 13–33.
- 5 I quote from the following editions: Sherry Reames (ed.), 'John Lydgate, *The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete*', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 2003), pp. 146–68; Lydgate, *Saint Alban* (Alban), ed. Westhuizen; and Bale and Edwards, *Ss Edmund and Fremund* (Edmund).
- 6 See also Lydgate, *Alban*, ed. Reinecke, ll. 57–63.
- 7 See similarly Theodor Wolpers, *Die englische Heiligenlegende des Mittelalters. Eine Formgeschichte des Legendenerzählens von der*

- spätantiken lateinischen Tradition bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Anglia 10 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1964) at pp. 309–11, 320–3.
- 8 Bale and Edwards, *Edmund*, ll. 263–6.
 - 9 Bale and Edwards, *Edmund*, ll. 194–200.
 - 10 Gregory Roscow, *Syntax and Style in Chaucer's Poetry*, Chaucer Studies VI (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1980), p. 64.
 - 11 In the *Scottish Legendary*, the saints are rarely referred to by their title or by demonstrative pronouns. Instead, personal pronouns and sometimes their names predominate. While Margaret is never called 'saint' at all in the Scottish version, George is sometimes given the title 'sancte'. Yet in these cases the allocation is not made randomly but in anticipation of his subsequent status of sainthood and his intercessory powers, or from the perspective of a later author (e.g. Ambrose) whom the Scottish compilation cites.
 - 12 Cf. Henry Noble MacCracken (ed.), 'The Legend of Seynt Gyle', in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part 1*, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1910 for 1911), pp. 161–73.
 - 13 The *terminus post quem* for the composition of the text is 1371 (in the legend of Ninian the hagiographer mentions David II, who reigned from 1329 to 1371), and the linguistic features of the Early Scots dialect make a date after the turn of the century unlikely; see Adam J. Aitken, *The Older Scots Vowels: A History of the Stressed Vowels of Older Scots from the Beginnings to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Caroline Macafee, STS 5th ser. 1 (Glasgow: Booksource, 2002).
 - 14 Cf. Prol. ll. 21–30. The manuscript is located at Cambridge University Library, Gg. 2.6. For the text, see William M. Metcalfe (ed.), *Legends of the Saints in the Scottish Dialect of the Fourteenth Century*, 3 vols, STS 1st ser. 13, 18, 23, 25, 35, 37 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1896), which replaced Carl Horstmann's earlier editions; see Horstmann, *Barbour's, des Schottischen Nationaldichters Legendensammlung, nebst den Fragmenten seines Trojanerkrieges. Zum ersten Mal herausgegeben und kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881). Scholarship on the compilation is scarce; see the few entries in John Scahill (ed.), *Middle English Saints' Legends*, Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 90–4 and much needed. I am currently preparing a comprehensive study on the *Scottish Legendary* and its narrative techniques for publication. All quotations from the text are taken from Metcalfe's edition.
 - 15 That the legend of George is so much shorter can be attributed to its function as a commemoration for the opening of the armourers' guild's new hall. See in detail on the contextual grounding e.g. Jennifer Floyd, 'St. George and the "Steyned Halle": Lydgate's Verse for the London Armourers', in Cooper and Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters*, pp. 139–64.

- 16 Cf. the beginning of the *Legenda Aurea*, *Cap. XCIII* in Theodor Graesse (ed.), *Jacobi a Voragine, Legenda aurea. Vulgo Historia Lombardica dicta*, 3rd edn (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1965 [1890]).
- 17 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 49–55.
- 18 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 56–8.
- 19 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 93–6.
- 20 Lydgate's *Margaret*, ll. 113–19.
- 21 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 99–102.
- 22 Lydgate's *Margaret*, ll. 225–31.
- 23 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 273–80.
- 24 *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 340–2.
- 25 Cf. Lydgate's *Margaret*, ll. 155–61, 183–9, 204–10, 218–24, 260–6.
- 26 Cf. *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 135–7, 282–6, 537–41, 576–87, 638–69.
- 27 Cf. *Scottish Legendary* XXVIII, ll. 520–3, 596–603, 672–84, 708–11.
- 28 Cf. especially Chaucer VIII.1–14, 22–8: Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and *Scottish Legendary*, Prol. ll. 1–11, 36–9. See in more detail on the sources used by the Scottish author Regina Scheibe, “‘Idilnes Giffis Novrysingis to Viciis’: The Prologue of the Scottish Legends of the Saints”, in L.A.J.R. Houwen (ed.), *Literature and Religion in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland. Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, Mediaevalia Groningana n.s. 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), pp. 1–21; and on Chaucer's sources for his tale e.g. Carleton Brown, ‘The Prologue of Chaucer's “Lyf of Seint Cecile”’, *Modern Philology* 9.1 (1911), pp. 1–16; G.H. Gerould, ‘The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale’, in W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (eds), *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), pp. 664–84; and Sherry Reames, ‘The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale’, in Robert M. Corrales and Mary Hamel (eds), *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 491–527.
- 29 Unfortunately I cannot go into more detail here, but see e.g. Karen Arthur, ‘Equivocal Subjectivity in Chaucer's Second Nun's Prologue and Tale’, *Chaucer Review* 32.3 (1998), pp. 217–31; Anne Eggebroten, ‘Laughter in the *Second Nun's Tale*: A Redefinition of the Genre’, *Chaucer Review* 19.1 (1984), pp. 55–61; Joseph L. Grossi, ‘The Unhidden Piety of Chaucer's “Seint Cecilie”’, *Chaucer Review* 36.3 (2002), pp. 298–309; V.A. Kolve, ‘Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale* and the Iconography of Saint Cecilia’, in Donald M. Rose (ed.), *New Perspectives in Chaucer Criticism* (Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1981), pp. 137–74; Lynn Staley Johnson, ‘Chaucer's Tale of the Second Nun and the Strategies of Dissent’, *Studies in Philology* 89.3 (1992), pp. 314–33; Elizabeth Robertson, ‘Apprehending the Divine and Choosing to Believe: Voluntarist Free Will in Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale*’,

Chaucer Review 46.1–2 (2011), pp. 111–30; Gail Berkeley Sherman, ‘Saints, Nuns, and Speech in the *Canterbury Tales*’, in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (eds), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 136–60.

- 30 Gail Berkeley Sherman has argued that the Second Nun’s facelessness is reflected in her name: she ‘is in truth the “Second Nonne”, the “other no one”, the anonymous vehicle for, and creation of, the language attributed to her’ (‘Saints, Nuns, and Speech’, p. 148). Since we are concerned with a male author who imagines a ‘feminine’ voice that recreates, *qua* her femininity, a male story, in that sense the Nun is always ‘second’ also in terms of her voicing and narrative role.
- 31 See Jennifer Sisk’s Chapter 6 in this volume for a detailed discussion of this matter.
- 32 Cf. Robert J. Meyer-Lee, ‘The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48, at pp. 323–4, and, by the same author, ‘John Lydgate: The Invention of the English Laureate’, in *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 49–86.
- 33 Cf. Lydgate, *Saint Alban*, ed. Westhuizen, p. 76.

Reforming sanctity: the Digby *Mary Magdalen* and Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce* of *Marie Magdalene*

Tamara Atkin

Sanctity, the quality of being holy, is by definition an inviolable state.¹ This chapter takes as its subject two plays that give dramatic shape to the life of Mary Magdalene, the sinner turned saint whose conversion might best be read as a crash course in becoming holy. They are: the Digby *Mary Magdalen* (c. 1490s), which survives in a single manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 133; and Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (c. 1553), which was printed twice in the 1560s. Although both plays work to reveal the holiness of the Magdalene's life, the decisions made by their respective authors about which episodes from her life to dramatise and, perhaps more importantly, how to dramatise them, reveal the extent to which her sanctity, far from inviolable, is in fact constructed to reflect the very different confessional positions of playwrights writing before and during the English Reformation. In other words, the Magdalene's sanctity in these plays is not just a question of the holiness of her life, but also the style and mode of performance deployed to give that holiness dramatic meaning. As such, this chapter is less an illustration of sanctity as literature as it is an exploration of both the drama of sanctity and the sanctity of drama. So where the author(s) of the Digby play deploy spectacle as a way of underscoring Mary's holiness, Wager imagines the Magdalene's conversion, the apotheosis of her sanctity, as an opportunity to reject spectacle in favour of a stagecraft centred on the naked truth of Scripture. For the author(s) of the Digby play, the spectacle of Mary's sanctity is what makes her drama holy. For Wager, spectacle is not only attached to the profligacy of the penitent Magdalene, but also serves to illustrate, from a reformist point of view, the abuses inherent in medieval, Roman Catholic patterns of piety.²

At the end of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, the Pryst thanks the audience for attending to 'þe sentens / That we have playyd in

yower syth'.³ With over fifty speaking characters, appearing in no fewer than nineteen different locations, and a range of special effects that include burning temples, quaking statues, sea-faring vessels, and heavenly visitations, the Pryst's characterisation of the play as a spectacle seems largely justified. It is a conclusion shared by the play's many critics and articulated most recently by Joanne Findon, who prefaces her book *Lady, Hero, Saint: The Digby Play's Mary Magdalene* (2011) by designating the play a 'spectacular *tour de force*'.⁴ But while the play proper ends by emphasising the centrality of sight to its 'incarnational aesthetic' – an aesthetic that, in the words of Gail McMurray Gibson, is defined by an 'ever-growing tendency to transform the abstract and theological to the personal and concrete' – a short scribal note that follows the explicit suggests an alternative audience of readers, who are urged to correct any faults that they might encounter in the transcription of the text.⁵ Appealing directly to 'þe redars', the scribe requests, 'Yff þer be any amyssse, þat to amend.' (ll. 2142–3). In short, the sole surviving manuscript of the play encodes two very different horizons of reception. On the one hand, the Pryst's words to the audience point to the play as performance, as visual spectacle; on the other, the scribe's words to the reader fashion the play as book, as an artefact to be read and, if necessary, corrected.⁶

The play's most recent editors have estimated that the surviving manuscript was copied in *c.* 1520–30, at least two decades after the play was composed.⁷ In the absence of concrete evidence a range of different auspices have been posited, but wherever it originated, it later fell into the hands of Myles Blomefylde, who signed the manuscript with his initials.⁸ From the 1560s to his death in 1603, Blomefylde lived in Chelmsford, so for at least part of its early history the play was in that city and may have been among the plays performed there in the 1560s and 1570s.⁹ Around the same time as Blomefylde's move to Chelmsford, John Charlewood printed a copy of a play written by Lewis Wager some fifteen years earlier, entitled *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (1566).¹⁰ Advertised on the title page as 'very delectable for those which shall heare or reade the same', Wager's *Marie Magdalene*, like the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, seems to appeal to two different audiences: to 'heare' the play is to witness its performance; to read it is to engage with it as a material text.¹¹

The Digby *Mary Magdalen* and Wager's *Marie Magdalene* may have both circulated and been performed in the middle of the sixteenth century, but their treatment of their central character

differs greatly. By the late Middle Ages, the Magdalene had one of the most elaborate biographies of all Christian saints. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory I argued in favour of a single Magdalene, composed of at least three separate biblical figures: the woman identified as Mary Magdalene from whom Jesus expels seven devils in Luke 8:2–3, and who is described as the first to witness Christ's Resurrection in Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:55, and John 19:25; Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha of Bethany, who sits at Christ's feet in Luke 10:38–42 and anoints Him with perfume in John 11:1–2; and the nameless female sinner who washes Christ's feet at the home of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:26–50. So great was his authority that this composite Magdalene survived exposure by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples in two treatises published 1518 and 1519, and continued to be venerated by the Roman Catholic Church until the liturgical calendar reform of 1969.¹² By the eleventh century a shrine had been established at Vézelay and her life story extended beyond the various biblical accounts to incorporate a range of different legendary elements. The narrative found in the *Legenda Aurea* (*Golden Legend*, c. 1267) is the first major and certainly the most influential synthesis of all aspects of the biblical and post-ascension aspects of the Magdalene's life, and the story that it tells of Mary's journey to France in a rudderless boat, her conversion of the King and Queen of Marseilles and her final, hermetic years of retirement in the desert is also the one dramatised by the author(s) of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*. In contrast, the version of her life depicted by Lewis Wager omits all of the post-ascension elements, and ends with the episode at the house of Simon the Pharisee.

The spectacular dramaturgy of the Digby play is not only necessitated by its plot – by what one critic has called the 'sprawling' aesthetics of the late medieval understanding of the life of Mary Magdalene – but also highlights the extent to which spectacle and the spectacular are integral to any account of late medieval orthodox piety and practice.¹³ In contrast, the truncated version of Mary's life dramatised by Wager is both an indication of his commitment to the reformist doctrine of *sola scriptura*, and a conscious rejection of the histrionic mode of playing advocated by the Digby play. In short, the conversion of the Magdalene in *The Life and Repentance of Marie Magdalene* is best understood not just as the conversion of its heroine from a life of sin to sanctity, but the conversion of the saint play as a genre.¹⁴

In her pioneering study of the Digby *Mary Magdalen*, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints* (2004), Theresa Coletti

proposes that the play enters 'into explicit and implicit dialogue with East Anglian ... religious traditions', that it both reflects and contributes to its cultural context.¹⁵ While it would be wrong to describe the religious culture of fifteenth-century East Anglia as homogenous – in fact, when read as both an illustration and interrogation of the 'spiritual efficacy of spectacle', the Digby *Magdalen* reflects a cultural landscape in which beliefs and practices were richly nuanced – Gail McMurray Gibson's account of its 'concrete and incarnational devotions' provides a useful starting point for thinking about the spectacular dramaturgy of the Digby play.¹⁶

Discussing the incarnational aesthetic of fifteenth-century culture, Gibson cites the will of Isabella, Countess of Warwick, as evidence of the countess's concrete devotional identification with her patron saint, Mary Magdalene.¹⁷ Specifying the design, measurements, and iconography of her tomb monument, Isabella requires that 'my Image to be made all naked, and no thing on my hede but myn here cast bakwardys ... and at my hede Mary Mawdelen leyng my handes a-crossd'.¹⁸ Instructing that her own sepulchral image replicate the iconography traditionally associated with the Magdalene – the image of the penitent Magdalene, naked but for her loose, uncovered hair has been widespread since the thirteenth century and is still immediately recognisable today – the tomb both incorporates an image of the saint as intercessor, crossing the arms of the dead countess, and moulds Isabella into a type of Magdalene, making her image a performance of her own patron saint.¹⁹ Moreover, if, in the words of Caroline Bynum Walker's famous formulation, female saints approached God not by rejecting the physicality attributed to women but 'by sinking more fully into it', Isabella's desire to take on the form of the Magdalene reflects a conviction that even at the point of death 'the body is not so much a hindrance to the soul's ascent as an opportunity for it'.²⁰ In short, in Isabella's tomb, as in the Digby *Magdalen*, the communication of spiritual truths is not only contingent on but also made meaningful through embodiment.

Coletti has noted that the Digby play 'foregrounds Mary Magdalene's corporeality in particular but also materiality in general'.²¹ Such an observation would hardly be remarkable if it pertained only to the pre-conversion portion of the play – the identification of the Magdalene with Luke's sinner had, by the Middle Ages, led to her being branded a whore – but what is striking about the Digby *Mary Magdalen* is that the Magdalene's body in particular and bodies in general continue to dominate even after

the conversion sequence.²² So, for instance, given the long-standing association of the Magdalene with sexual sin it is perhaps unsurprising that it is the allegorical character Luxsurya who is responsible for leading her to the site of her temptation, the tavern, itself a conventional locus of fleshly temptation in late medieval literature. Here, as Vincent Gillespie has remarked, 'Mary finds herself in a dizzyingly illegible physical and textual environment, peopled by personifications masquerading as real people, real people acting like personifications'.²³ His point is that the scene's 'psycho-moral' model both illuminates and is illuminated by the more explicitly allegorical *Wisdom*, a copy of which is also bound in Digby 133 and signed by Blomefylde.²⁴ But his observation also serves to highlight the bodiliness of this scene in which sins of the flesh are quite literally fleshed out by the actors who embody them. Take the figure of the Galavnt, who is Coryoste in his disguise as tempter. His fascination with Mary's 'sofreyn colourrys' is matched only by his concern for the niceness of his own attire (l. 517). In an article that considers clothing as one of *Mary Magdalen*'s organising principles, Coletti has suggested that the play's author(s) seem to be 'expanding the traditional association of sinful Magdalene with fine clothing by making her tempter a dedicated follower of fashion as well'.²⁵ The point is not just that Mary is tempted by the finery of this 'frysch new galavnt', but that as a physical expression of her own curiosity he mirrors her own propensity to sin (l. 491). Coletti goes on to argue that 'over the course of the play what Magdalene ... wears [is] inseparable from the changing condition of her spiritual state' and certainly, when Mary glosses her own costume change before her encounter with the King of Marseilles with the words, 'O gracyus God, now I vndyrstond! / Thys clothyng of whyte is tokening of mekenesse', the point seems well made (ll. 1606–7).²⁶ Moreover, just as the allegorical characters in the temptation scene serve to emphasise the functional and aesthetic centrality of embodiment to drama as a representational practice, so the on-going interest in Mary's attire after her conversion points to the playwright(s)' commitment to the concrete in the communication of spiritual truths.²⁷

The play's recourse to a dizzying array of special effects complements this approach and likewise suggests that its author(s) recognised drama as an art form uniquely suited to the expression of late medieval piety. From burning buildings – Simon's house, the pagan temple at Marseilles – to ocean voyages, a shaking heathen idol to angelic descents from the clouds, the manuscript's detailed, descriptive stage directions offer some insight into the

centrality of spectacle to the play's dramaturgy.²⁸ To give just one example, during the final section of the play in which Mary's thirty years in a desert wilderness is dramatised, Christ's command to the angels to sustain Mary with 'gostly fode' (l. 2005) is followed by comprehensive instructions for the staging of the required miracle:

Here xall to angyllys desend into wyldyrnesse, and other to xall bryng an oble, opynly aperyng aloft in þe clowddys; þe to benethyn xall bryng Mari, and she xall receyve þe bred, and þan go aȝen into wyldyrnesse.²⁹

After receiving this heavenly bread, the second angel informs her that she 'xall be receyved into þe clowddys' for further spiritual nourishment (l. 2025). As with Christ's earlier command, directions for the prescribed action immediately follow the angel's words:

Here xall she be halsyd wyth angellys wyth reverent song. Asumpta est Maria in nubibus. Celi gavdent, angeli laudantes felium Dei.³⁰

In both cases, the presence of lengthy stage directions that essentially reiterate as third-person commands instructions already expressed by one or more character reflects a conscious effort to stage manage moments of heightened visual spectacle.³¹

Though some of the play's many miracles do not require elaborate stage effects – and here I am thinking of the resurrections of Lazarus and the Queen of Marseilles – many, including the directions outlined in the previous paragraph, rely on stage devices to produce their miraculous effect. Daryll Grantley has speculated that the descent and ascent of Mary and the angels would have been achieved by 'some sort of lift platform ... perhaps covered in fabric to represent cloud', and it seems likely that a similar effect would have been used in the earlier scene when a cloud descends from heaven to 'sett þe tempyl on afyer' (1561*a*).³² While a modern audience might question the spiritual efficacy of any miracle staged to order – and certainly the elaborate artifice of such shows provided ample ammunition to sixteenth-century reformers eager to condemn Roman Catholicism as theatrical – the prevalence of such effects in a number of contemporary saints' miracle and conversion plays suggests that to a late medieval audience spectacle offered a suitable conduit for the communication of spiritual truths.³³ For instance, the stage directions for the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* reveal the extent of the play's reliance on mechanical contrivance to produce its many miracles.

First ‘þe Ost must blede’, later, after the host has been tossed into a cauldron, ‘shall þe cawdron byle, apperyng to be as blood’, then, after the host has been taken out of the cauldron and cast into a furnace, ‘the owyn must ryve asunder and blede owt at þe cranys, and an image appere owt with woundys bledyng’.³⁴ Similarly, the pivotal moment on the road to Damascus in the Digby *Conversion of St Paul* is accompanied by the following direction:

Here comyth a feruent, wyth gret tempest, and Saule faulyth down
of hys horse; þat done, Godhed spekyth in heuyn.³⁵

Here the ‘*feruent*’, or the *lux de coelo* prescribed by the stage direction, is apiece with the call for ‘*a clowd from heven*’ to come down and ‘*sett þe tempyl on afeyr*’ in the Digby *Magdalen* (1561a). Grantley has argued that effects involving fire and light were not only the most spectacular, but also the most suitable for the portrayal of miracles.³⁶ What is more, the association of fire and light with the revelation of divine truth may go some way to explain the priority of spectacle in the Digby *Magdalen* and plays like it.

In the fifteenth-century dialogue between Dives and Pauper, Pauper offers the following three-fold defence of images:

þe seruyn of thre thynggys. For þey been ordeynyd to steryn manys
mende to thynkyn of Cristys incarnacioun and of his passioun and
of holy seyntes lyuys. Also þey been ordeynyd to steryn mannys
affeccioun and his herte to deuocioun, for often man is more steryd
be syghte þan heryng or redyngge. Also þey been ordeynyd to been a
tokene and a booke to þe lewyd peple, þat þey moun redyn in ymage-
rye and peynture þat clerkys redyn in boke.³⁷

Arguing for the instructive use of images, Pauper’s case is at heart an extension of the one made by Pope Gregory I centuries earlier, and its appearance in a fifteenth-century text bears out Michael O’Connell’s observation that the Gregorian defence of images remained ‘largely effective in the Western Church until the fifteenth century’.³⁸ However, just as Gregory’s defence was a response to the removal and destruction of images by Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, so Pauper’s argument reflects a more generalised anxiety about opposition to religious representation. In short, throughout history orthodox defences of images have coincided with questions about their validity. In its ‘frequent insistence on the power of “shewing” and corporeal apprehension of sacred truths’, the Digby *Mary Magdalen* seems to celebrate ‘the very phenomenology of theater, the embodying of narrative’.³⁹

But as Coletti has suggested, in places it seems to challenge this materially determined, on the one hand offering up a version of Christ who cautions against spectacle in communication of divine knowledge – ‘Blyssyd be þey at alle tyme / That sen me nat, and have me in credens’ (ll. 699–700) – and on the other uncoupling the exclusive association between spectacle and sanctity by making visual display the ‘dramatic signature of the play’s demons and lecherous pagan priests’.⁴⁰ To put it another way, the play’s exploitation of and anxiety about visual resources in the expression of sacred knowledge mark it as a product of and contribution to a religious culture both invested in and wary of images. Some half a century later, when that anxiety had eventually resulted in a state policy that sponsored the wholesale removal of images from English churches, it is not hard to imagine how a performance of the Digby *Magdalen* might have appealed to a mixed audience of viewers both keen to retain a connection with outlawed beliefs and practices and eager to expose the potential for idolatry that had led to those beliefs and practices being banned.

Whatever doubts the playwright(s) of the Digby *Mary Magdalen* may have had about the embodiment of sacred knowledge in corporeal form, they are both inherited by and central to the version of the saint’s life as dramatised by Lewis Wager. The play begins with a cautious defence of the saint play in general and *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* in particular, revealing the author’s anxiety about drama as an appropriate medium for the expression of spiritual truths. Responding to those who ‘detract out [sic] facultie’, the Prologue argues:

Doth not our facultie learnedly extoll vertue?
 Doth it not teache, God to be praised aboue al thing?
 What facultie doth vice more earnestly subdue?
 Doth it not teache true obedience to the kyng?
 What godly sentences to the mynde doth it bryng?
 I saie, there was neuer thyng inuented
 More worth, for mans solace to be frequented.⁴¹

Emphasising the play’s pedagogic value, the Prologue’s defence is clearly related to the old Gregorian argument rehearsed by Pauper in his dialogue with Dives. But unlike Gregory I or the author of *Dives and Pauper*, Wager was not just a ‘learned clerke’ but also a ‘Catholic-friar-turned-Protestant-preacher’ and his play was written to advance the reformed cause.⁴² Although he was not alone

in his commitment to using drama as a platform for popularising reformed policy and practice, he shared with other reformed dramatists an acute awareness of drama's potential for idolatry, and his play's defensive Prologue identifies these concerns, somewhat paradoxically, as the driving force for his drama.⁴³ So while the play's pre-conversion scenes share much with the Digby *Magdalen*, the post-conversion sequence is striking in its effort to reform both content and form of earlier, medieval retellings of the Magdalene's life.

In her recent study of Wager's play, Patricia Badir has suggested that its detailed treatment of the pre-penitent Mary's costume, its elaborate staging of her dressing and undressing, reflects 'a developing obsession with [her] body that far surpasses medieval precedent and fuels a burgeoning baroque aesthetic'.⁴⁴ The point is perhaps overstated for, as we have seen, bodies and in particular Mary's body are central to the meaning and method of the Digby *Magdalen*. Nonetheless, it is certainly the case that, as in the Digby *Magdalen*, Mary's temptation takes place at the hands of a cast of allegorical characters intent on both flattering and drawing attention to her physical form:

Of my trouth it wer pitie in myne opinion
 But that your geare should be well trimmed,
 For you are well fauoured, and a pretie mynion,
 Feate, cleane made, wel compact, and aptly lymmed.⁴⁵

Speaking in his guise as Prudence – for 'Infidelitie may not be called infidelitie' (l. 467) – Infidelitie's words recall those of the Digby *Magdalen*'s Coryoste, who likewise celebrates the 'femynyte' of the Magdalene's form (l. 516). In both texts a vice character, operating under a false identity, taps into a 'masculine discourse of desire' in which the association between Mary's femininity and her proclivity for sexual sin provides the idiom for her temptation.⁴⁶ In the scene that follows, Infidelitie and his 'ofspr yng' dress Mary so '[t]hat neither law nor prophets she shall regard' (ll. 318, 319), constructing her as an image markedly at odds with the play's expressed intention to 'teache, God to be praised aboue al thing' (l. 32). In doing so, it is not just that Wager creates a character who, in Badir's words, 'becomes the embodiment of the imaginative excess, the gaudy surplus of creative energy, which Protestant iconoclasts associated with religious art', but that he marks her and the whole pageant of her temptation as a mode of performance ripe for reform.⁴⁷

Compared with the corresponding sections of the Digby *Magdalen*, the post-conversion sequence of Wager's play is relatively short, amounting to around 750 lines in contrast with the Digby *Magdalen*'s 1450. While Wager's commitment to scriptural over legendary sources offers one obvious reason for his decision to curtail the play in this way, the fact that the gospel accounts of Mary's encounter with Christ after the Resurrection are also ignored suggests other factors contributed to his treatment of the post-conversion Magdalene. The rejection of so much material has led Peter Happé to suggest that Wager sought to produce a 'Protestant adaptation of the saint play' in which word is substituted for image.⁴⁸ Although, in the absence of a coherent corpus of surviving texts, Lawrence Clopper has urged caution in the identification of the saint play as a genre, there is much about the play, particularly in its final scenes that supports this argument and one way of understanding Mary's renovation is as an extended sermon on the reformed doctrine of justification.⁴⁹ Gone are the showy miracles of the Digby *Magdalen* and in their place The Law and Knowledge of Sinne teach God's mercy and grace (ll. 1173–308), Christ teaches His role in the satisfaction of God's justice (ll. 1321–414), and Faith and Repentaunce teach God's gift of faith (ll. 1417–540). Following the famous scene at the house of Simon the Pharisee (ll. 1565–2049), in which Mary's adherence to these teachings mark the extent of her transformation, these lessons are restated in a final scene between the Magdalene, Justification, and Love, who summarises the argument as follows:

Such persons we introduce into presence,
 To declare the conuersion of hir offence.
 Fyrst, the lawe made a playne declaration,
 That she was a chylde of eternall damnation:
 By hearyng of the law came knowledge of synne,
 Then for to lament truly she dyd begynne.
 ...
 But Christ whose nature is mercy to haue,
 Came into this world synners to saue,
 Which preached repentence synnes to forgeue,
 To as many as in hym faithfully dyd beleue.
 By the word came faith, Faith brought penitence,
 But bothe the gyft of Gods magnificence.
 Thus by Faithe onely, Marie was iustified,
 Like as before it is playnly verified,
 From thens came loue, as a testification
 Of Gods mercy and her iustification.⁵⁰

Paul White has argued that the doctrine of justification by grace through faith which is both embodied and expounded by the figures of The Lawe, Faith, and Repentaunce earlier in the play, and is here repeated by Loue, ultimately derives from Wager's reading of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.⁵¹ As I have argued elsewhere, given the date of composition – before 1553 on the basis of the Prologue's reference to 'the kyng' (l. 34) – it is at least as plausible that Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's *Certayne Sermons, or Homilies* (1547) served as the more immediate source for the play's treatment of this doctrine.⁵² But whatever the source, what is striking about the passage is not just that it so emphatically espouses reformed teaching, but that it does so in a way that prioritises speech over action. Reiterating the lessons only recently taught by The Lawe, Faith, and Repentaunce, Loue's sermon serves to emphasise Wager's insistent commitment to the word as the primary mode for the expression of divine knowledge. Here, this style of playing is markedly at odds not only with the incarnational aesthetic of the Digby *Magdalen*, but also with the bodily drama of the play's pre-conversion sequence. In short, the passage testifies Wager's commitment to reforming the saint play and highlights the extent to which Mary's conversion is imagined as the exchange of a profligate for a pious mode of playing.

In her discussion of Wager's stagecraft, Badir has argued that the play 'cannot sustain the theological principles it teaches because the theatricalised retelling of Luke 7 also replays the eucharistic enactment of the word made flesh'.⁵³ While this chapter has focused more on the disparities between the pre- and post-conversion scenes than the episode at the house of Simon the Pharisee, there are aspects of the play in its final, closing speeches that suggest a similar conclusion. Take, for instance, the first two lines of Loue's speech, quoted above. Adopting terms – 'persons', 'presence', 'conuersion' (ll. 2117, 2118) – that were pivotal in contemporary debates over the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, these lines, which are perhaps best understood as a guarded defence of embodiment, expose the fact that all drama, even drama committed to the word, is phenomenologically dependent on the body in the communication of its meaning.⁵⁴ For all that he might have set out to reform the saint play, to advance a new hagiographical dramaturgy, by framing his play with speeches – the Prologue's, Loue's – that draw attention to concerns about drama as an appropriate medium for the expression and propagation of reformed

teachings, Wager, perhaps unwittingly, reveals the extent to which he was unable to fulfil that task.⁵⁵

If Wager's intention in writing *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* was to create a 'reformed theatre' in which images are replaced by text and spectacle by words, then the surviving play is testament to the fact that his project was only partially successful.⁵⁶ Certainly, the absence of any other surviving saint's plays from the middle or later sixteenth century suggests that his efforts to reform the stage were largely ignored by contemporary and later playwrights. However, there is a tradition of texts going back to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, in which a hagiographic model is used to shape the lives of certain secular subjects, which continued to flourish during and after the Reformation. Belonging to this tradition are plays like, but not restricted to, John Phillip's *Pacient and Meeke Grissill* (1566?),⁵⁷ Thomas Dekker et al.'s play on the same subject, *Patient Grissill* (1603),⁵⁸ Richard Bower's *Apius and Virginia* (1575),⁵⁹ and perhaps most pertinently for our purposes, Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Honest Whore* (1604).⁶⁰ As martyrs for their virtue – the title page to Bower's play describes its heroine as 'a rare example of the vertue of Chastitie, by Virginias constancy, in wishing rather to be slaine at her owne fathers handes, then to be deflowred of the wicked Iudge Apius' – the female subjects of these plays are clearly imagined as types of saint, their lives given dramatic form at a time when the saint play was out of favour, if not banned outright.⁶¹ Wager's *Mary Magdalene* might represent the last play on the Magdalene by an English playwright, but the thematic elements borrowed from an earlier tradition of plays about her life highlight the on-going attraction of the spectacle of her sanctity.

Notes

- 1 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'sanctity, n.', 2a.
- 2 The reformist celebration of scriptural authority can then, at least in part, be understood as a conscious rejection of a more sensory model for engagement with faith. The centrality of the senses and in particular the productive interplay between the material and the visual in late medieval devotional practice is at the heart of much recent critical discussion about fifteenth-century religious culture. See for instance Shannon Gayk, *Image, Text and Religious Reform in Fifteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Shannon Gayk and Kathleen Tonry (eds), *Form and Reform: Reading across*

- the Fifteenth Century* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2011); Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012); James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution, The Oxford English Literary History, Vol. 2: 1350–1547* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. Chapters 8 and 10; and Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
- 3 Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall Jr. (eds), *Mary Magdalen*, in *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian Library MSS. Digby 133 and E Museo 160*, EETS O.S. 283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 24–95, at p. 94, ll. 2131–2). All further references are to this edition.
 - 4 Joanne Findon, *Lady, Hero, Saint: The Digby Play's Mary Magdalene*, *Studies and Texts* 173 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011), p. 2.
 - 5 Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), p. 7. See also Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, pp. 1–18, for a more general discussion of the term's meaning and application.
 - 6 Strikingly, both acts of consumption – watching and reading – are imagined as collective activities. Just as the scribe's injunction to amend any errors points to a readership joined in the collective endeavour of producing an accurate text, so the Pryst's speech gives way to the communal singing of the *Te Deum laudamus*.
 - 7 Baker et al., 'Introduction', in *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, pp. ix–c, at p. xl.
 - 8 The case for Norwich has been made by Clifford Davidson, 'The Middle English Saint Play and Its Iconography', in Clifford Davidson (ed.), *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, EDAM Monograph Series 8 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 31–122; Bishop's Lynn by Jacob Bennett, 'The *Mary Magdalene* of Bishop's Lynn', *Speculum* 75 (1978), pp. 1–9; Ipswich by Glynn Wickham, 'The Staging of Saint Plays in England', in Sandro Sticca (ed.), *The Medieval Drama* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), pp. 99–119; and Lincoln by Harry M. Ritchie, 'A Suggested Location for the Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *Theatre Survey* 4 (1963), pp. 51–8. The signature occurs at the top of the manuscript's first leaf, fol. 95r. The Digby *Mary Magdalen* is one of at least four plays owned by Blomefylde. For a fuller discussion of his library see D.C. Baker and J.L. Murphy, 'The Books of Myles Blomefylde', *The Library* 31 (1976), pp. 377–85.
 - 9 John Coldeway, 'The Digby Plays and the Chelmsford Records', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 18 (1975), pp. 103–21.

- 10 *Short Title Catalogue* [hereafter STC] 24932. A variant appeared a year later from the same press (STC 24932a).
- 11 While hearing clearly pertains to some kind of performance, if only a recital, it is striking that the title page consciously avoids the language of sight. Lewis Wager, *A New Enterlude, Neuer Before thys Tyme Imprinted, Entreating of the Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (London, 1566; STC 24932), sig. A1r.
- 12 Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, *De Maria Magdalena et triduo Christi disceptatio* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1518), and *De tribus et unica Magdalena disceptatio secunda* (Paris, 1519). The authority of Gregory's single Magdalene is discussed in Helen Meredith Garth, *Saint Mary Magdalene in Mediaeval Literature*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science ser. 67, 3 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1950), p. 19; Victor Saxer, *Le Culte de Marie Madeleine en occident: des origines à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire 3 (Auxerre-Paris: Publications de la société des fouilles archéologiques et des monuments historiques de l'Yonne, 1959), pp. 2–6; Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 95–7; and Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 32–5.
- 13 Scott Boehnen, 'The Aesthetics of "Sprawling Drama": The Digby *Mary Magdalene* as Pilgrim's Play', *Journal of English and German Philology* 98 (1999), pp. 325–53.
- 14 The difficulties associated with defining the saint play as a genre are considered in this chapter on p. 200. For a survey of the extant texts and an account of some generic features, see Darryll Grantley, 'Saints and Miracles', in Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 263–86. On saint plays more generally, see Davidson, 'The Middle English Saint Play'; Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, esp. Chapter 6; David Lyle Jeffrey, 'English Saints' Plays', in Neville Denny (ed.), *Medieval Drama*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 16 (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 69–89; and Chester N. Scoville, *Saints and the Audience in Middle English Biblical Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- 15 Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 23. Coletti has done more than any other critic to resurrect the critical reputation of the Digby play. Among her many publications, see "'Curtesy doth it yow lere': The Sociology of Transgression in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*", *English Literary History* 71 (2004), pp. 1–28; "'Paupertas est domum Dei': Hagiography, Lay Religion, and the Economics of Salvation

- in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, *Speculum* 76 (2001), pp. 337–78; and, ‘The Design of the Digby Play of *Mary Magdalene*’, *Studies in Philology* 76 (1979), pp. 313–33.
- 16 Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, p. 194; Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 18.
 - 17 Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 11.
 - 18 W. Dyde, *The History and Antiquities of Tewkesbury*, 2nd edn (Tewkesbury, 1798), p. 58, cited in Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 11.
 - 19 The development of this popular iconography is discussed in Haskins, *Mary Magdalene*, pp. 232–6.
 - 20 Caroline Bynum Walker, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 172, 194, cited in Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, p. 214.
 - 21 Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, p. 214.
 - 22 The history of the association of the Magdalene with the sin of prostitution is discussed in Jansen, *Making of the Magdalene*, pp. 168–77.
 - 23 Vincent Gillespie, ‘Venus in a Sackcloth: The Digby *Mary Magdalen* and *Wisdom*’, in Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 72–92, at p. 80.
 - 24 Gillespie, ‘Venus in a Sackcloth’, p. 81.
 - 25 Coletti, ‘The Design of the Digby Play’, pp. 326–7.
 - 26 Coletti, ‘The Design of the Digby Play’, p. 332.
 - 27 Victor Scherb has argued that the play’s pattern of recapitulation functions to reinscribe the worldly settings of the play’s pre-conversion first half as the spiritual settings of the post-conversion second half. See *Staging Faith: East Anglian Drama in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Associated University Presses, 2001), pp. 172–90; and ‘Worldly and Sacred Messengers in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*’, *English Studies* 73 (1992), pp. 1–9.
 - 28 The editors of the EETS edition suggest that the description of the ‘howse’ set ‘on afyere’ by the ‘tother deylls’ in the stage direction at l. 743a must be that of Simon. Conversely, both David Bevington and Jerome Bush have suggested it refers to the tower of hell. See Baker et al., *The Late Religious Medieval Plays*, p. 207; David Bevington (ed.), *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 713; and Jerome Bush, ‘The Resources of *Locus* and *Platea* Staging: The Digby *Mary Magdalene*’, *Studies in Philology* 86 (1989), pp. 139–65, at p. 158.
 - 29 Baker et al. (eds), *Mary Magdalen*, 2018a.
 - 30 Baker et al. (eds), *Mary Magdalen*, 2030a.
 - 31 Julie Stone Peters has identified this style of stage direction – lengthy, prescriptive – as typical of early sixteenth-century vernacular plays. See Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

- 2000), p. 26. For a more extensive discussion of the evolution of the stage direction, see Linda McJannet, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions: The Evolution of a Theatrical Code* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999), esp. Chapter 4.
- 32 Daryll Grantley, 'Producing Miracles', in Paula Neuss (ed.), *Aspects of Early English Drama* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), pp. 78–91, at p. 83.
 - 33 Grantley has identified four extant plays that fall into this broad category: the Digby *Magdalen* and *Conversion of St Paul*; the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*; and the Cornish *Meriasek*. Since the focus of this chapter is vernacular drama, I exclude the last of these plays from the discussion. See Grantley, 'Producing Miracles', p. 79.
 - 34 *The Play of the Sacrament*, in Norman Davis (ed.), *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS S.S. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 58–89, at pp. 73, 79, 80, ll. 480a, 672a, 712a.
 - 35 *The Conversion of S. Paul*, in Baker et al., *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, pp. 1–25, at p. 7, 182a.
 - 36 Grantley, 'Producing Miracles', p. 87.
 - 37 Priscilla Heath Barnum (ed.), *Dives and Pauper*, EETS 275, 280, 323, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 82.
 - 38 *Sancti Gregorii Magni Epsitolarum Lib. XI, Epist. 13* in PL LXXVII, cols 1128–30, at col. 1130; Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 41.
 - 39 Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, p. 192; O'Connell, *Idolatrous Eye*, p. 86.
 - 40 Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, pp. 193–4.
 - 41 Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, in Paul Whitfield White (ed.), *Reformation Drama in England: The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene, The History of Jacob and Esau* (London: Garland, 1992), pp. 1–66, at p. 2, ll. 24, 31–7. All further references are to this edition. The use of the word 'facultie' in this context, to mean a 'kind of ability; a branch of art or science', likens drama to 'one of the departments of learning at a University' and suggests an analogy between actors and the members of a university faculty, which supports the Prologue's position that 'this feate' was originally 'vsed ... at the vniversitie' (l. 26). See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'faculty, n.', ii.7.
 - 42 Wager, *A New Enterlude*, sig. A1r; Paul Whitfield White, 'Introduction', in *Reformation Drama in England*, pp. xix–lvi, at p. xxiii.
 - 43 John Bale is perhaps the most famous advocate of this kind of drama in this period. For a fuller consideration of the use of drama as reform polemic in the work of Bale, Wager and others see John King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage and Playing in Tudor*

- England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Tamara Atkin, *The Drama of Reform: Theology and Theatricality, 1461–1553* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
- 44 Patricia Badir, *The Maudlin Impression: English Literary Images of Mary Magdalene, 1550–1700* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), p. 37.
- 45 Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, ll. 191–4.
- 46 Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints*, p. 157.
- 47 Badir, *The Maudlin Impression*, p. 36. On the play's engagement with contemporary attitudes towards religious art in general and statutory in particular, see also Badir, "'To allure vnto their loue': Iconoclasm and Striptease in Lewis Wager's *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*", *Theatre Journal* 51 (1999), pp. 1–20, which covers much of the same ground as the first chapter of her more recent book; and Atkin, *Drama of Reform*, especially Chapter 3, which examines the play through the lens of the 1547 Injunctions which proscribed religious images.
- 48 Peter Happé, 'The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play', in Clifford Davidson (ed.), *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, EDAM Monograph Series 8 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 205–40, at p. 229.
- 49 Lawrence Clopper, 'Communitas: The Play of Saints in Late Medieval and Tudor England', *Mediaevalia* 18 (1995), pp. 81–109, much of which is reworked in *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). In addition to the fact that few texts survive, Clopper has argued that the numerous ecclesiastical and civic records cited by other critics as evidence of the prevalence of genre actually refer to unscripted entertainments and other non-dramatic forms of display. The issue has been further debated by Clopper with Clifford Davidson and Elizabeth Baldwin, in 'Issues in Review: Saint Plays', *Early Theatre* 1 (1998), pp. 97–116.
- 50 Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, ll. 2117–34.
- 51 Paul Whitfield White, 'Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene* and Jean Calvin', *Notes and Queries* 28 (1981), pp. 508–12. See also the 'Introduction' to his edition of the play, pp. xxxii–iv; and his book, *Theatre and Reformation*, pp. 184–5.
- 52 The title pages of six distinct imprints of the 1547 Book of Homilies announce that they were printed on the same day: STCs 13638.5, 13638.7, 13639, 13639.5, 13640, and 13640.5. Only homilies three, four, and five are universally attributed to Cranmer. Other undisputed attributions include homily 2 to John Harpsfield, chaplain to Edmund Bonner, conservative Bishop of London, 6 to Bonner himself, and 11 to Thomas Becon, Cranmer's chaplain.

- 53 Badir, *The Maudlin Impression*, p. 27.
- 54 Around the time of the play's composition Archbishop Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner, the conservative Bishop of Winchester, were engaged in a printed debate about the Eucharist. See Cranmer, *A Defence of the True and Catholike Doctrine of the Sacrament of the Body and Bloud of our Sauour Christ* (London, 1550; STC 6001); Gardiner, *An Explication and Assertion of the True Catholique Faith, Touching the Moost Blessed Sacrament of the Aulter* (Rouen, 1551; 11592); and Cranmer, *An Answer of the Most Reuerend Father in God Thomas Archebyshop of Canterburie, Primate of all Englande and Metropolitan vnto a Crafty and Sophisticall Cauillation Deuised by Stephen Gardiner* (London, 1551; STC 5991).
- 55 The play's concern about the proximity of drama to idolatry both echoes sentiments expressed over a century earlier in *The Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*, most likely the work of two writers with Lollard tendencies, and anticipates the anti-theatrical rhetoric of Puritanical critics of commercial playhouses of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Jonas Barish's *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) remains the standard account of the evolution of anti-theatrical writings from Plato to the present day, and contains chapters on anti-theatrical Lollardy and Puritanism.
- 56 Badir, *The Maudlin Impression*, p. 43.
- 57 STC 19865.
- 58 STC 6518.
- 59 STC 1059.
- 60 STC 6501. Though he does not treat the plays listed here, for a more extensive treatment of the secularisation of the saint play see John Wasson, 'The Secular Saint Plays of the Elizabethan Era', in Davidson, *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, pp. 241–60. For a consideration of *The Honest Whore* as a Magdalene play see Frédérique Fouassier, 'Mary Magdalene on Stage: "The Sinner in the City" and the Persistent Remnant of Catholic Culture in an Anglican Society', *Theta* 7 (2007), pp. 53–66.
- 61 R.B., *A New Tragical Comedie of Apius and Virginia* (London, 1575; STC 1059), sig. A1r.

The humanist grammar of sanctity in the early *Lives* of Thomas More

Anna Siebach Larsen

In the dedicatory epistle of his *Life of Sir Thomas More*, Nicholas Harpsfield refers to his text as ‘a garlande decked and adorned with pretious pearles and stones’, fashioned from the ‘pleasaunt, sweete nosegay of most sweete and odoriferous flowers’ of William Roper’s own, earlier *Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore*.¹ Collapsing temporal and technological boundaries, Harpsfield’s description encompasses his subject, his style, and – in its evocation of the verdant borders of the manuscript or the woodcut title page – the potential materiality of his text. It indicates a moment of transition, in which familiar motifs, genres, and symbols can be reappropriated, emptied of their meanings and repurposed, a liminal space where Harpsfield and Roper strive to construct a coherent temporal and symbolic narrative that merges the facts of More’s life with the demands of both hagiography and the model of the exemplary man of letters.² Perched as the *Lives* are at the threshold of what Julia Reinhard Lupton terms the ‘passion of secularization’, the relationship between these models is not necessarily antithetical, but as the *Lives* make clear, the path between the valorisation of the intellectual and a fervent insistence upon the sanctity of the martyr is ambiguous and difficult to navigate.³

More himself had argued for the deep connection between humanist learning and religious virtue in his *The Lyfe of Johan Picus*, but for Harpsfield and Roper, this *Lyfe* had its limits as a model: despite his many qualities, Picus was neither a martyr nor a saint.⁴ There were, of course, plenty of saints who did bridge the gap between learning and sanctity; indeed, there had been a recent ‘rise in vernacular biography of Christian intellectuals’ through the late Middle Ages.⁵ Perhaps the most obvious example is Capgrave’s *Katherine*, who, in light of Capgrave’s argument for an active rather than hermetic scholarly sanctity, might have been a particularly apt model for the very public More.⁶ However, the

authors of the *Lives* seem to be fashioning a subtly different model of intellectual, lay sanctity for their post-Reformation world, one in which 'pagan' learning is not something to be disavowed along the difficult road to perfection.⁷

Poised thus between the model of the exemplary, learned individual on the one hand, and that of the erudite saint on the other, these authors faced two interrelated difficulties that highlight the potential fault lines in hagiography's shifting cultural functions in early modern England. The first was the task of demonstrating the sanctity of an intellectual and political layperson, without the host of miracles which had long been the key proofs of sanctity.⁸ The second problem encompasses the first, pointing back to the limitations of the existing template of the learned saint: if the primary generic marker of hagiography is its 'lack of specificity' and its aim 'to suppress individualizing detail and to bring out the saints' resemblance to one another and to Christ',⁹ how does one write of a saint whose historical specificity is not buried in the past, but whose life and traumatic death are still reverberating through contemporary political and religious life? How does one square the demands of exemplarity, in which the saint must conform to a model and provide a pattern for others to follow, with the inescapable and myriad proof-texts of the saint's individuality, uncontrollably replicated through the technology of the printing press?

The solution for the authors of the early *Lives* – specifically here Roper, Harpsfield, Stapleton, and Cresacre More¹⁰ – was to seize upon the core of More's public persona – his learning, particularly his authorial activity – and to render it the proof of his sanctity and his intellectual exemplarity. They achieved this by crafting an emphatically *textual* afterlife that operated both narratively and materially. Just as Harpsfield's description simultaneously suggests the aesthetics of the illuminated manuscript and the printed book, so the *Lives* evince a self-conscious generic liminality as they seek to accommodate the long-standing tropes of hagiography with the life and death of a new type of lay, humanist saint.¹¹ More's post-mortem participation in the sacred economy is not effectuated through the circulation of his dismembered body, but rather through that of his books, which function as ever-renewable physical relics – literal proof-texts. In these *Lives*, the 'grammar' of true sanctity and the 'grammar' of humanism merge: More is a saint because he is a humanist. To push the point, More's sanctity is rooted in his texts – secular and religious – and this transformation of the realm of marvels from the arena to the page has far-reaching

implications for the structure of the *Lives*, as well as for the emerging recusant culture of sanctity.

While the *Lives*' authors rely on one another for source material, their utilisation of traditional hagiographic and nascent humanist tropes in their recreation of More's life varies. It is tempting to theorise for the *Lives* a simple chronological and teleological trajectory in which hagiographic motifs are increasingly untethered from their customary generic purpose and are transformed into either empty conventions or conveniently symbolic vessels that can be repurposed for secular settings, yet the reality is more complex. Explicitly hagiographic¹² in their intent, the *Lives*' authors work to integrate emergent humanist ideals with the motifs, structures, and aims of traditional hagiography. The result is what might usefully be termed 'hagio-biography', a 'hybrid' genre whose authors are deeply aware of the conventional nature of the motifs from which they are drawing, and yet are as committed to the formal and confessional validity of these inherited tropes as they are to their flexibility and expansion. It is in this uneasy status, hovering between what we now term hagiography and biography, that the *Lives* reveal their attempts to fashion a humanist grammar of sanctity, demonstrating in the process the work of cultural and textual memory in their reworking of the hagiographic genre.

Thomas More was beheaded at the Tower of London on July 6, 1535. During the subsequent decades he became *the* lay exemplar of martyrdom for the sake of the embattled Catholic Church in England, a status that his supporters claimed as 'his speciall peerelesse prerogatiue'.¹³ At least five accounts of his life and death were written by his fellow Englishmen during the subsequent hundred years, each tied to the others, yet shaping its account to the current needs of the recusant community. The first, short *Lyfe*, written by More's son-in-law William Roper (c. 1496–1578) circa 1555, circulated in manuscript until its 1626 printing, and was used by the betimes-exiled Nicholas Harpsfield (1519–1575) as the base for his much longer *Life*.¹⁴ While Harpsfield wrote his version sometime before 1557, it circulated solely in manuscript until edited in 1932.¹⁵ Thomas Stapleton (1535–1598), who left England for Louvain after Mary's reign, wrote his Latin *Vita* during the 1580s,¹⁶ printing it in France in 1588 with his *vitae* of Thomas the Apostle and Thomas Becket.¹⁷ The unknown Ro. Ba. followed with his 1599 *Lyfe*, which explicitly acknowledges its debt to Stapleton and Harpsfield. The fifth *Life*, written by More's great-grandson Cresacre More (1572–1649) and published in Louvain in 1626,

was the most widely circulated until the nineteenth century, when it was deemed too unoriginal to be of much interest, and attention shifted to its predecessors.¹⁸

The fate of Cresacre's *Life* is demonstrative of the complicated history of More scholarship as well as hagiography.¹⁹ Until recently, the *Lives* have primarily been treated as historical sources for More's life, or as test cases for a nascent biographical genre, with any embarrassing traces of hagiography dismissed as lingering medievalism.²⁰ According to this approach, the *Lives* succeed when they demonstrate a 'Renaissance' originality and interest in 'particularity and individuality' that echoes More's own literary qualities, and fail when they revert to a stolid, unimaginative insistence upon saintly and textual types regardless of historical veracity, seeming to subordinate learning to sanctity.²¹ The *Lives*' somewhat tenuous status is not only the result of a valorisation of the early modern over the medieval, or 'factual' over fictional: many of the moves to recuperate hagiography also depend on these distinctions between genre and period, isolating the *Lives* from their hagiographic predecessors.²² With a few exceptions,²³ the result is that little attention has been paid to the *Lives* themselves as literary productions, or according to their internally articulated goals.²⁴ Yet by accepting at the outset that the *Lives*' authors are fully conscious of their generic ambiguity, then their continuities and ruptures with earlier models and motifs can be seen as the very mechanisms at work in their efforts to validate More's humanism, martyrdom, and sanctity within a newly religiously heterogeneous society, rather than aberrations that must be explained away or excused.²⁵

The subject of each of the early *Lives* is two-fold: Thomas More as historical personage, and the pattern of exemplarity that he simultaneously followed and modelled. Roper makes this duality clear at the outset of his *Lyfe*, introducing More as 'a man of singular vertue and of a cleere vnspotted consciens, as witnesseth Erasmus, more pure and white then the whitest snowe, and of such an angelicall witt, as England, he saith, neuer had the like before ... vnyvarsaly, as well in the Lawes of our owne realme ... as in all other sciences, right well studied'.²⁶ In this short passage, Roper delineates clearly the virtues that More will model throughout the remainder of the text,²⁷ many of which would not be out of place in earlier hagiography. However, this passage also reflects a model of exemplarity which is not limited to 'religious' virtues. Roper's first authority is Erasmus, a witness not only to More's qualifications as a scholar and writer, but also to his 'singular vertue' and his 'cleere

vnsported consciens'. Erasmus' own scholarly reputation authorises him to testify of virtues that cannot be separated into religious and secular, but are intrinsically interconnected and interdependent.²⁸ Stapleton makes this point clear in his preface, which he begins by declaring his subject as 'the life, the character, and the most noble martyrdom for the orthodox Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith of Thomas More, whose reputation for piety, learning, and wit is so widely known'.²⁹ The picture of exemplarity that Stapleton constructs contains at its core an indivisible connection between piety and learning: while recognising that the two can exist separately, Stapleton repeatedly insists that More is saintly because he properly unified them. Harpsfield echoes this point by pairing an earlier invocation of Erasmus' authority with that of Cardinal Morton, who described More as 'the notablest man of all Inglande. And that he atchieued such an excellent state of woorthines, fame and glory as neuer did (especially laye man) in Inglande before'.³⁰

Harpsfield deepens the connection by drawing typological parallels between More and classical figures such as Socrates, Cicero, and Lucian, who prefigure his intellectual achievements as well as his martyrdom for the sake of political expediency. While he situates More within a genealogy of secular, pagan authors, Harpsfield (and his fellow hagio-biographers) is fully aware of the potential friction between this intellectual and political lineage and the texts' hagiographic intentions, and implicitly addresses it at this moment by placing More concurrently within the community of saints, a position which enables More to transcend the achievements and legacy of his pagan predecessors.³¹ Harpsfield makes this simultaneity clear in his bifurcated narrative of More's execution. Initially, More is brought to the scaffold in a death scene markedly devoid of an actual beheading. He appears to effect his own death when, in a display of the gallows humour that wends its way through hagiography, he encourages the executioner to "Plucke vp thy spirites, man, and be not afraide to doo thine office; my necke is very short; take heede therfore thou stryke not awrye". Indicating both the manner in which More met his death and the act itself, Harpsfield notes laconically, 'So passed Sir Thomas More out of this world to God, vpon the verve same day in which himselfe had moste desired'.³²

After this curiously elided death scene, Harpsfield embarks upon a teleological exploration of the Church's English history, climaxing in an extended analysis of the parallel lives and martyrdoms of More, Thomas of Dover, and Thomas Becket. Harpsfield

focuses on the fulfilment of hagiographic tropes through historical particulars, yet ultimately declares that despite the worthiness of the other saints, More, the 'blessed Protomartyr of all the laitie for the preservation of the vntie of Christes Churche', exceeds both his predecessors in the 'cause of [his] martyrdom'.³³ Harpsfield then returns to his narrative and the moment toward which the Church's historical and theological development has naturally led: More's execution. At this point, the discourse on the history of the Church having provided the background necessary for understanding the full gravity of what occurred after More's directive to his executioner, Harpsfield returns us to the scene of More's death. More is, once again, executed, and his dismembered body is displayed.³⁴

In circling back to this climactic moment, Harpsfield creates a space in which he can continue to develop the teleological and typological commentary that allows the text to move across time and space. He inserts a comparison between the display of More's body and, not another saint, as one might expect, but, once again, *Cicero*.³⁵ That the parallel Harpsfield finds most fitting for More's life, death, and relationship with his country is that of a classical author suggests that More supersedes his saintly namesakes not only because of the greater indignity of his death, but also because of More's more expansive range of virtues. Harpsfield at no point insinuates that More's martyred predecessors were lacking; however, he does seem to acknowledge that as models, they are insufficient for the sixteenth-century recusant, lacking those specifically humanist qualities which were listed at the outset of Roper's text. By supplying More with pagan as well as Catholic antecedents, Harpsfield adheres to hagiography's typological structures, while expanding the conception of sanctity itself to include those qualities of wit and learning which were central to the 'humanist' model of excellence.

Like Harpsfield, Stapleton utilises classical examples to explore the ramifications of More's humanist virtues for his political, intellectual, and domestic activities. However, Stapleton does voice concern about the incorporation of these qualities in his argument for More's martyr status. He devotes an entire chapter to what he deems a 'natural' comparison between More and Cato³⁶ but, unlike Harpsfield, he veers away from forming a typological connection between the two, leery of More's 'worldly' virtues possibly usurping the rightful place of his 'higher and nobler' gifts.³⁷ Accordingly, Stapleton places his discussion of the martyrdom,

the subject which ‘chiefly induced [him] to undertake [his] whole narrative’, immediately subsequent to the Cato comparison.³⁸ According to Stapleton, More’s ‘worldly honours, his skill in letters, his charming character, his most dear family, etc.’, render his martyrdom more glorious than it would have been if he were unlettered and unknown. More is a natural successor in the long line of martyrs ‘of noble rank’ – a status determined not only by birth but also by personal accomplishment – who are most deserving of the Church’s public commemoration.³⁹ If More were not such an extraordinary humanist, his martyrdom would not be quite so exemplary in its demonstration of humility and patience. On the other hand, it is his faith (and martyrdom) which renders his humanism acceptable, providing the ultimate seal for the model of learned devotion followed by his hagio-biographers.⁴⁰ Elsewhere, Stapleton uses More’s own letters to authorise this incorporation of humanist virtue into his model of sanctity.⁴¹ Quoting More at length, Stapleton allows his subject to make the explicit argument that ‘learning, yea, even worldly learning ... prepares the mind for virtue’, as long as that learning is ‘joined with virtue, [for] renown for learning, when it is not united with a good life, is nothing else than splendid and notorious infamy’.⁴² Stapleton’s More wields a tri-fold authority, legitimising this pattern of exemplarity through his textual voicing of its tenets and justifications, his embodiment of its virtues, and, finally, certifying it with his martyrdom.

If citations from More’s writings function as a kind of gloss upon the text woven by his works and actions, the activity of his hagio-biographers can be seen as careful compilation and annotation working to render even more clear the meanings and ramifications of a complexly shifting and manifold subject. By placing More within a network of ancient and contemporary writers, the hagio-biographers create a textual and religious genealogy within which his humanist style and interests are a natural outgrowth of their religious and intellectual roots. Arising from this web of allusion and comparison, we find a model of saintly authorship that stresses humanist qualities of wit, elegance, and learning as necessary in the contemporary battle against heresy.

All four authors go to great lengths to establish More’s rightful place as one of the luminaries of contemporary European intellectual life.⁴³ Harpsfield introduces his long section on More’s Latin and English works with the acknowledgement that it is through his books ‘whereby he hath consecrate his woorthy name to immortalitie in this transitorie worlde to the worldes ende’. His discussion

begins with a description of More's Latin epigrams, 'partly translated out of greeke, partly ... wittily and pleasauntly deuised and penned of his owne'. In this short paragraph, Harpsfield sets out the criteria for accomplished writing: it is only if a writer is witty, clever, learned, and does not resort to 'byting or contumelious' speech that s/he may be deemed, like More, 'woorthy to be sett and compared with many like wryters of the olde [forerun] dayes'.⁴⁴

These qualities, testified to by numerous cited witnesses, are entirely in keeping with the ideal humanist writer. The difficulty, though, lies not in proving More's embodiment of humanist values, but in the connection between his seemingly secular accomplishments and his sanctity, a gap which Harpsfield deftly elides in a single sentence at the end of his discussion of *Utopia*: 'And as [*Utopia*] in his kinde is singuler and excellent, conteynyng and prescribing a common wealth farre passing the common wealthes deuised and instituted by Licurgus, Solon, Numa pompilius, Plato and diuers other; so wrate [More] in another kinde and sort of booke against Luther no lesse singuler and excellent.'⁴⁵

At this juncture in his text, Harpsfield creates a paradigm of theological writing in which the qualities which characterise More's humanistic brilliance are also those virtues which are markers of theological truth and the working of God's grace through His chosen authors. In the theological battles that were raging across the battlefields of print, it was particularly important for the hagio-biographers to be able to pinpoint the various proofs which indicate the veracity of Catholic arguments. In the case of More, his rhetorical sophistication, restraint, and deeply-rooted classical learning are key indicators of the justness of his claims in contrast to those of his opponents. Harpsfield fleshes out this link between humanism and religion in a long discussion of the textual confrontations between Tyndale and More, framing the interchange as a series of debates in which Tyndale emerges as a crude writer and thinker, unlearned and prone to underhanded attacks. Despite his repeated mischaracterisation of More's arguments, and More's generous representations of his own, Tyndale is, according to Harpsfield, utterly routed by More's 'pleasant', 'merry', and 'wily' confutations and depth of knowledge.⁴⁶

This model leads the hagio-biographers into a bind when forced to confront those of More's works which seem to pervert these exemplary qualifications. The most glaring example is More's pseudonymous attack on Luther, which was infamous for its abusiveness and the crudeness of its language.⁴⁷ Stapleton admits that

More's reply was characterised by a 'rudeness and vulgarity ... unbefitting his position', yet argues that More, rather than failing to conform to standards of composition and behaviour for which he himself argued, shaped his text to its subject, situation, and addressee, the 'foul-mouthed Luther'. The situation Stapleton paints is that of a saint and accomplished writer who reluctantly descends into the pit to confront the adversary: for the sake of truth, More 'smears Luther's lips with dainties fit for such a rogue and gives him a sweet morsel suited to his palate'. Stapleton argues that More's reply is evidence of his deeply ingrained rhetorical understanding and the justness of his argument, and what seemed to many to be a harsh and crudely-written burst of anger was admirably successful: 'Whereas generally Luther was very busy with his pen and ready to reply to any who attacked him, after he had read Ross [More's pseudonym], he became more dumb than a fish.'⁴⁸

At times the contemporary ramifications of More's writing activity are made explicit, as when Harpsfield, in his timeline of the history of the English Church, pairs More with the Carthusian martyrs both to justify More's decision to leave the Charterhouse early in his life and to make an argument for the primacy of the laity in this new chapter of ecclesiological history. Paralleling the Carthusians' life of prayer with More's literary life, Harpsfield seems to grant greater weight to More's textual struggles with the world: while the Carthusians are God's 'meete and apte legates and ambassadours ... they might seeme rather angells appering in mens bodies then very men', it is More who is the 'moste notable and valiant capitaine against these pestilent and poisoned heretikes' who were conquered 'most royally in his noble bookes'.⁴⁹ The insinuation is that More's humanism and public engagement render him best suited for a struggle against heresy in which danger lurks in those who masquerade as both pious and humanist, such as Tyndale. Yet the scope of More's textual power is not limited to explicit attacks against heresy. For Harpsfield, even More's intensely personal and pastoral Tower Works – *A Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, *De Tristitia Christi*, *A Treatise to Receive the Blessed Body of our Lord*, and *A Treatise upon the Passion* – are martial in their effects, leading their readers to eternal victory against inward struggles and those heretical powers which, by Harpsfield's time, were certainly winning in the earthly realm.⁵⁰

The circumstances of the 'Tower Works' composition reveal their virtues. In case the reader is not adequately convinced of the texts' import, Harpsfield undergirds his argument with typological

references which extend the network within which More must be understood beyond even the classical antecedents already invoked, placing the texts within a divinely inspired corpus which stretches back to Moses. Since More had no access to writing utensils while in the Tower, Harpsfield explains, in a description of divinely guided composition that invokes Moses and Isaiah, that he was forced to write 'these bookes with a deade blacke coale', a physical manifestation of another, spiritual 'most hott burning coale, suche a one ... as touched and purified the lippes of the holy prophete Esais, that directed his hande with the deade coale'.⁵¹ Without making an explicit claim for More as prophet, despite occasional prophetic moments throughout the text, Harpsfield roots More within a textual prophetic tradition which is revealed in his writing, in the texts, and in their effects. In the writing of the Tower works, More's heart was 'so inflamed and incensed' in what seems to be the final stages in his process of purification and sanctification, echoing early saints' trials by fire, that 'the good and wholsome instructions and counsell that he gaue to other men in his bookes he himselfe shortly after, in most patient suffering ... experimented and woorthely practised in himselfe'.⁵² This inner purification is open to all More's readers as they suffer through their own tribulation, 'whether [it] proceede of any inwarde temptation ... or by any outwarde tentation of the world threatning to spoyle and bereaue vs of our goodes, landes, honour, of our libertie and freedome, by greeuous and sharpe imprisonment, or finally of our life withall'.⁵³ While the Tower Works can be read as helpful counsel, for the Catholic reader, they are more than supportive treatises on long-suffering. Multiple authors, human and divine, are at play, their various writing surfaces and utensils collapsed into the marks on the printed page, to be vivified by the reader who realises that the ultimate author is God, who inscribed His text upon More's heart, a text which More embodied, like all saints, becoming a text himself as he and his words merged in his enactment of the 'good and wholsome instructions and counsell'.⁵⁴ In an age of paper rather than parchment, More's texts were also written upon (his) flesh as signs to be deciphered by those who could see and read, and to be rewritten again and again by the martyrs who followed him.⁵⁵

If More embodied his texts in his life and death, they came to embody him during his afterlife. Lupton points to the reliquary function as a key, isolatable element of hagiography, arguing that it is in the relic that the iconicity of the saintly body is extracted

and displayed.⁵⁶ In contrast to the medieval saints, little emphasis, either in text or in practice, is placed upon More's body and other physical objects associated with him. Stapleton devotes a brief paragraph to More's head, which was rescued by his daughter Margaret after a month of display on London Bridge. There is a curiously ambiguous nod to the hagiographic commonplace of miraculous preservation which carefully avoids any hint of the more flamboyant claims of the hagiographic tradition: 'One remarkable fact that his friends noted was that his beard, which before his death was almost white, now appeared to be of a reddish-brown colour.' Any preservation of the head is entirely human: Margaret is the one who treats the 'head with the greatest reverence', using spices to keep it, and relegating it to a family heirloom, rather than the kind of physical relic around which a cult might form. The winding sheet with which Margaret buries More's body is obtained in a manner 'which may well be regarded as miraculous', but again, the winding sheet is consigned to the status of family heirloom which may or may not even exist at the time of Stapleton's writing.⁵⁷

In the absence of these traditional physical indices, More's texts take on the role typically fulfilled by bodily relics: it is as if the proliferation of his writings, first primarily in manuscript form – a literal enfleshing of his sanctity – and then through print. Thus his relics could be proliferated *ad infinitum*, paralleling the practice of diluting a saint's blood so that it – and its power – might be disseminated more widely. In his discussion of the Tower Works, Harpsfield makes this reliquary and memorial function explicit:

which copie [of the manuscript], if some [men] had, they might and would more esteeme then other bookes written with golden letters, and woulde make no lesse accompt of it then St Jerome did of certaine bookes of the learned martyr Lucian written with his owne hande, the perchaunce he happed [vpon], and esteemed them as a pretious iewell.⁵⁸

Harpsfield here transforms the manuscript into both relic and virtual reliquary, preserving within itself the physical remnant of More's sanctity, glimpses of which are available to those who know to look. Yet as the manuscript itself is that proof, it collapses relic and reliquary, vessel and object, inner and outer, in a move which mirrors, yet cannot replicate, More's own transcription of the interior text inscribed on his heart. All that is left are traces which must be transformed and embodied anew in the lives, and possibly deaths, of his fellow Catholics.

Physical copies of More's writings, mostly in manuscript, but also print, were treated like relics, eagerly sought and carefully handed down within families.⁵⁹ It was not only individual manuscripts which functioned as emblematic witnesses within the scattered recusant community. Within the hagio-biographies, the texts themselves become concrete objects which can function as proof of More's sanctity. While Harpsfield described More's books as 'weapons' in a conflict which was insistently physical in its ramifications for the recusants, Stapleton goes so far as to introduce More's Latin apothegms as 'evident, clear and, so to say, tangible proofs of More's great qualities'.⁶⁰ This slippage from text to object reveals the tensions inherent in the competing textual models – hagiography and intellectual and public biography – within which Stapleton is working. Hagiography demands a physical legacy – body parts to be revered, sites to visit – yet it is through More's texts that his sanctity was exhibited and continually disseminated, requiring that they function as the 'tangible proofs' demanded by the community and by generic tradition.

This manifestation of latent generic pressures is perhaps most stark at the end of Cresacre More's *Life*. The last of the hagio-biographers, Cresacre is chronologically the furthest from the medieval tradition. His intent, however, remains primarily hagiographic, and formal traces in the text testify of his awareness of the genre and its deep structural influence. Like his predecessors, Cresacre places great emphasis upon text as a locus for the development and exhibition of sanctity and the exercise of virtue. As noted above, there is a dearth of post-mortem miracles associated with More. For other saints, these were often listed at the end of hagiographies as a means of extending a saint's power and virtue ad infinitum, a catalogue which Cresacre replaces with a list of More's texts.⁶¹ Through formal means, he underscores the fact that in the case of More, his books are his miracles. This explosion of text at the end of the *Life* is a powerful manifestation of the presence of the W/word throughout More's life, as well as his own embodiment of that W/word in his own person and in the texts which invite the gaze and engagement of the beleaguered and exiled English Catholic community. Through More's textual sanctification, the early hagio-biographers sought to create a virtual, textual *locus* for their now-exiled co-religionists to orient and ground themselves within a rapidly shifting religious and intellectual climate.

Notes

- 1 Nicholas Harpsfield, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore, Knight*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS O.S. 186 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963 [1932]), p. 6. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (ed.), *William Roper: The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, knyghte*, EETS O.S. 197 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1935]). Harpsfield's *Life* is dedicated to Roper, who commissioned it.
- 2 See L.E. Semler, 'Virtue, Transformation, and Exemplarity in *The Lyfe of Johan Picus*', in A.D. Cousins and Damian Grace (eds), *A Companion to Thomas More* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), pp. 95–113.
- 3 Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. xxi. Lupton uses this term to describe the incorporation of medieval hagiographic motifs and tropes into secular Renaissance literature. See E.E. Reynolds (ed.) and Philip E. Hallett (trans.), *Thomas Stapleton: The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), pp. 35, 71, 132.
- 4 A.S.G. Edwards, Katherine Gardiner Rodgers, and Clarence H. Miller (eds), *Life of Pico*, in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 51–123. See also Benjamin V. Beier, 'The Subordination of Humanism: Young More's "Profitable" Work, *The Life of John Picus*', *Moreana* 47.1 (2010), pp. 23–44, esp. pp. 36–7 and 43 on the relationship More poses between the religious and the humanist. See also Semler, 'Virtue', esp. p. 99.
- 5 Karen A. Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 85. Cresacre More compares More and Aquinas: *The Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight*, preface and notes by Joseph Hunter (London: William Pickering, 1828), p. 106.
- 6 Winstead sees this in Capgrave's *Life* of Katherine and his *Life* of Augustine: 'John Capgrave', p. 22. See also pp. 30–1, 35, 50–87. See also George Sanderlin, 'John Capgrave Speaks up for the Hermits', *Speculum* 18.3 (1943), pp. 258–62.
- 7 For Katherine's rejection of her classical learning, see John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), VI.1324–50. However, as Sarah James notes, '[Katherine's] rejection of classical authorities in favour of Christianity does not signal an end of her studiousness, but instead a development of it ... It is her scholarship which places her in the powerful position of preacher to, and converter of, numerous pagan opponents, most of whom are men', in James, "'Doctryne and studie": Female Learning and Religious Debate in Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*', *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 36 (2005), pp. 275–302, at

- p. 279. More's classical learning similarly empowers his fight against heresy, but unlike Katherine and others such as Jerome and Augustine, More's secular study and authorship is not wholly subsumed into his explicitly religious activity.
- 8 On miracles in early modern martyrologies, see William Sheils, 'Polemic as Piety: Thomas Stapleton's *Tres Thomae* and Catholic Controversy in the 1580s', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60.1 (2009), pp. 74–94; Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), esp. pp. 37–42; Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Susannah Brietz Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Alexandra Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', *Historical Journal* 46.4 (2003), pp. 779–815.
 - 9 Anke Bernau, 'A Christian *Corpus*: Virginity, Violence, and Knowledge in the Life of St Katherine of Alexandria', in Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (eds), *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 109–30, at p. 124; Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 2–3.
 - 10 Due to space, Ro. Ba. and the fragmentary Rastell's *Life* will not be discussed here; see Ro. Ba., *The Lyfe of Syr Thomas More, Sometymes Lord Chancellor of England*, eds Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock and P.E. Hallett, EETS O.S. 222 (London: Oxford University Press, 1950). For Rastell, see Harpsfield, *Life*, Appendix I, pp. 221–52. For the continental accounts of More's life, see Germain Marc'hadour, 'Latin Lives of Thomas More', in Cousins and Grace, *Companion to Thomas More*, pp. 21–38. See also Anne Lake Prescott, 'Afterlives', in George M. Logan (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 265–87.
 - 11 Obviously this term is deeply problematic and deserves fuller consideration than I can give it here. I restrict my use of it to the limits delineated by Daniel Wakelin and Jonathan Woolfson, the former describing it as 'a self-conscious commitment to return to the classics, or *ad fontes*, as did the advocates and teachers of the *studia humanitatis*'; see Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 7. Woolfson expands the concept into the public sphere, writing of Tudor humanism that it is 'a complex of relatively coherent and influential, if still rather general and quite open, ideas and methods. These ideas include a commitment to the "vita activa", to the pragmatic application of a fairly eclectic range of classical learning, to service to the common weal, and to quasi-republican traditions of political participation, drawn especially from ancient Roman rhetorical, historical and broadly political sources': see

- Woolfson, 'Introduction', in Jonathan Woolfson (ed.), *Reassessing Tudor Humanism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 1–21, at p. 9.
- 12 Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 9, 213–15; Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 132–4, 187–90; Cresacre More (CM), *Life*, pp. 4, 6–8.
 - 13 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 209. For More's reputation in contemporary England, see Jackson Campbell Boswell, *Sir Thomas More in the English Renaissance: An Annotated Catalogue* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994).
 - 14 For dating, see Roper, *Life*, p. xlv. On the manuscripts, see pp. xi–xxviii. On Roper himself, see pp. xxix–lvii.
 - 15 See Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. xiii–xliv, xxi.
 - 16 On Stapleton, see M.R. O'Connell, *Thomas Stapleton and the Counter Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964). See also Sheils, 'Polemic', esp. pp. 74–8.
 - 17 See Reynolds' discussion in Stapleton, *Life*, pp. vii–xiv. See also Michael Anderegg, 'The Tradition of Early More Biography', in R.S. Sylvester and Germain Marc'hadour (eds), *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), pp. 3–25, at pp. 9–12.
 - 18 See Anderegg, 'Early More Biography', pp. 14–23.
 - 19 There is no space here to unpack the ways in which nationalism, religion, and academic trends have inflected the discourse on More or hagiography. For More, Cousins and Grace, *Companion* is as good a place to start as any, particularly the 'Introduction' (pp. 11–20) as well as Marc'hadour, 'Latin Lives' and Michael Ackland, 'Modern Biographies of Sir Thomas More' (pp. 39–52). See also Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 12–71; Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 95–113; Bernau, 'Christian *Corpus*', pp. 123–4.
 - 20 For the clearest example of an opinion of the *Lives* based on an appraisal of More, see R.W. Chamber's teleological analysis of English literary history: 'The Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More and his School', in Harpsfield, *Life*, especially pp. clvii–lxxiv.
 - 21 James J. Greene, 'Utopia and Early More Biography', *Moreana* 31–2 (1971), pp. 199–208, at pp. 199, 205. For a qualified response, see Michael Anderegg, 'Utopia and Early More Biography: Another Review', *Moreana* 33 (1972), pp. 23–9. Judith Anderson argues that Harpsfield's 'hagiographic' designs 'bear mute testimony to another rent in the seam of unified truth in this century, and in this instance the truth rent is biographical'; see Anderson, *Biographical Truth: The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 49.
 - 22 So Thomas Heffernan identifies the primary characteristic of hagiography (or sacred biography) as its 'potential cultic status', which

'marks a major difference between Christian sacred biography, its Greco-Roman-Semitic ancestors, and the Renaissance biography which followed it'; see Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p. 35. Similarly, Anderegg defines hagiography by its allegiance to 'a set pattern' in which 'certain set scenes are related', and 'any thing that does not exemplify the piety, devotion, courage, and unswerving self-sacrifice of the subject is carefully excluded' (in contrast to biography); see Anderegg, 'Early More Biography,' p. 23.

- 23 Notable exceptions are Anderson's discussion in *Biographical Truth*, pp. 44–5; Warren W. Wooden, 'Structural Patterning in William Roper's *Life of More*', *Moreana* 64 (1980), pp. 100–6; Jonathan V. Crewe, 'The "Encomium Moriae" of William Roper', *English Literary History* 55.2 (1988), pp. 287–307. For the *Lives*' source material and historical veracity, see John Maguire, 'William Roper's *Life of More*: The Working Methods of a Tudor Biographer', *Moreana* 23 (1969), pp. 59–66; Germain Marc'hadour, 'Thomas Stapleton's Use of More's *English Works* (1557) in his *Vita Thomae Mori* (1588)', *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis: Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp. 83–90; Charles Crawford, 'Stapleton and More's "Letter to Bugenhagen"', *Moreana* 19–20 (1968), pp. 101–7; Charles Crawford, 'Stapleton and More's "Letter to Bugenhagen" (continued)', *Moreana* 26 (1970), pp. 5–16; F.W. Conrad, 'Manipulating Reputations: Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Elyot, and the Conclusion of William Roper's *Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knighte*', in Thomas F. Mayer and D.R. Woolf (eds), *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 133–61.
- 24 Regrettably, there is no room here to discuss in depth the explicit rhetorical and 'literary' techniques exploited by the *Lives*' authors, or the effect of More's own texts on the *Lives*' structure and style. The few treatments include Maguire, 'William Roper's *Life of More*'; Wooden, 'Structural Patterning'; and Semler, 'Virtue, Transformation, and Exemplarity'.
- 25 Recent studies in this vein include Sheils, 'Polemic'; Dillon, *Construction of Martyrdom*; Monta, *Martyrdom*; and Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See especially Monta, Shell, and Lupton, *Afterlives*, as well as Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), for the varying responses of contemporary writers within a range of genres to the issues raised by the shifting relationships between faith, humanism, politics, and literary form.

- 26 Roper, *Life*, p. 4. See also Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 39–60.
- 27 Roper, *Life*, pp. 55, 103; Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 74–5; Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 121–31; CM, *Life*, p. 21; Crewe, “‘Encomium Moriae’”.
- 28 Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 36–7, 47; CM, *Life*, pp. 95–7.
- 29 Stapleton, *Life*, p. xv. See also Anderegg, ‘Early More Biography’, p. 11.
- 30 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 11.
- 31 Harpsfield and Stapleton are particularly concerned with this potential conflict: while it is clear that More can be both a Ciceronian and a Christian, they are careful to note repeatedly that More’s achievements supersede those of his classical predecessors because they are not only intellectual, but also spiritual. His religious convictions and actions lift him beyond mere erudition, though that erudition is also what renders him an apt martyr for the early modern Church.
- 32 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 204. More’s death-scene jesting is in line with a hagiographic tradition of gallows humour perhaps most famously exemplified by Saint Laurence. See Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), *Iacopo da Varazze: Legenda Aurea*, 2 vols (Firenze: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), Vol. 2, pp. 754–73. More’s joke was seized upon by Protestants as proof of his ‘foolish levity in laughing and joking at so solemn a time’ (Stapleton, *Life*, p. 128). More’s supporters argued that it was proof of his peace of mind and wisdom. See Monta, *Martyrdom*, pp. 164–6.
- 33 Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 213, 216.
- 34 On decapitation and dismemberment as ‘rebuslike “attributes” not of individual saints but of hagiography as a genre’, see Lupton, *Afterlives*, p. 43, as well as pp. 52–9.
- 35 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 217.
- 36 Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 129–31.
- 37 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 131.
- 38 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 132.
- 39 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 133.
- 40 On the relationship between religion and humanism in early modern England, see Woolfson, ‘Introduction’, esp. pp. 7–9.
- 41 Stapleton here is following Roper: Maguire, ‘William Roper’; Marc’hadour, ‘Thomas Stapleton.’
- 42 Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 37, 94.
- 43 See James K. McConica, ‘The Recusant Reputation of Thomas More’, in Sylvester and Marc’hadour, *Essential Articles*, pp. 136–49, at p. 148.
- 44 Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 100–1.
- 45 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 105. On More’s restraint in debate, see Roper, *Life*, pp. 21–2; CM, *Life*, pp. 22–3.
- 46 See esp. Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 113–19, 121–6; CM, *Life*, pp. 122–3. Louis A. Schuster, Richard C. Marius, James P. Lusardi, and Richard

- J. Schoeck (eds), *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, 3 vols, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973). On the Tyndale–More controversy, see Rainer Pineas, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 36–119.
- 47 John M. Headley (ed.), *Responsio ad Lutherum*, 2 vols, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969). Headley links More's style to classical models: Vol. 2, pp. 803–23. See Pineas, *Tudor Polemics*, pp. 3–35; CM, *Life*, pp. 38, 124.
 - 48 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 32.
 - 49 Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 18, 207, 210; Stapleton, *Life*, p. 193; Roper, *Life*, pp. 6, 81.
 - 50 Harpsfield, *Life*, pp. 133–4, and Shell, *English Literary Imagination*, p. 7. For the Tower Works, see L.L. Martz and F. Manley (eds), *A Dialogue of Comfort*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 12 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976); G.E. Haupt (ed.), *Treatise upon the Passion, Treatise on the Blessed Body, Instructions and Prayers*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 13 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976); C.H. Miller (ed.), *De Tristitia Christi*, 2 vols, in *The Complete Works of Thomas More*, Vol. 14 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).
 - 51 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 135.
 - 52 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 135. Also Roper, *Life*, pp. 21, 24–36, 55–77; Stapleton, *Life*, pp. 183–4. On prophetic moments in Roper, see Anderson, *Biographical Truth*, p. 45. For Harpsfield, even *Utopia* is quasi-prophetic: *Life*, p. 103.
 - 53 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 133.
 - 54 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 135.
 - 55 On the role reading played in Catholic and Protestant martyrologies, see Monta, *Martyrdom*, esp. pp. 67, 74. While the play on text/body is characteristic of the hagiographic genre, for its instantiation in late medieval England, see, among others, Gail Ashton, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (New York: Routledge, 2000), esp. pp. 2, 11–68; Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
 - 56 See Lupton, *Afterlives*, p. 43.
 - 57 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 191.
 - 58 Harpsfield, *Life*, p. 135.
 - 59 On the 'cult devotional status' of the Tower Works, see Dillon, *Construction of Martyrdom*, p. 37. See also Paul J. Voss, 'The Making of a Saint: John Fowler and Sir Thomas More in 1573', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 99.4 (2000), pp. 492–512, esp.

p. 508; Clark Hulse, 'Dead Man's Treasure: The Cult of Thomas More', in David Lee Miller, Sharon O'Dair, and Harold Weber (eds), *The Production of English Renaissance Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 190–225. On the manuscripts of the *Lives* as family heirlooms, see Roper, *Life*, p. xii.

60 Stapleton, *Life*, p. 110.

61 CM, *Life*, pp. 314–44.

Afterword: calendar time in *balade* form

Catherine Sanok

In a stanza at the close of his mid-fifteenth-century *Life of St Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins*, Osbern Bokenham outlines how readers might say 11,000 Pater nosters during the course of a year in order to secure the intercession of this heavenly company.¹ The stanza is readily categorised as instrumental verse: its single function is announced in the preceding stanza: ‘And who-so lyste knowe how he may do / This nowmbyr to perform euen in a yere / the next kalende shewyth doctryn clere’ (‘And whoever would like to know how he may perform this number accurately in a year, the next schedule provides clear information’).² The explanation of how to accomplish this devotional feat wholly occupies the rhyme royal stanza that follows:

Thre hundryd dayis sexty & fyue
 Been in the yer, neythir mo ne lesse,
 As men by algorysme sone moun dryue,
 Up-on wych prynciple I dare expresse
 That thrytte pater noster ych daye wyt-out recchelesnes,
 Yf that yche sonday oon be put ther-to,
 Makyth euene the noumbyr, saue it addyth to.³

Three hundred sixty and five days
 Are in the year, neither more nor less,
 As men by algorithm can readily derive;
 Upon which principle I dare express
 That thirty pater nosters each day, without negligence –
 If on every Sunday one more is added –
 Makes the number accurately, except it adds two.

The Arundel manuscript of the legend, which I quote above, calls this stanza a *kalende*: that is, a discursive technology for marking time across a year, like Google calendar or a daily planner. As such, it stands against our most basic and familiar definitions of

'literature', which generally take as axiomatic its difference from instrumental texts. The use of verse in a premodern text such as this one does not complicate this classification, since verse often had a clear functional role in aiding memory in this period. Indeed, Bokenham's stanza is a mnemonic on the order of a much better known Middle English *kalende*, 'Thirty days hath November', though it is clumsier, and surely less effective than this lyric, which is, of course, still in use in only slightly modified form.

Bokenham's legend, however, aspires to literary status in a way that 'Thirty days' does not, as is witnessed by its style, its stanza form, and its place within a self-consciously literary legend. The stanza itself exhibits flourishes characteristic of Bokenham's self-presentation as a poet – in particular, his deference to the authority of the men who calculate the year according to established 'algorithms' and his self-conscious and tentative poetic persona – which add literary texture if not interpretive complexity or ambiguity. These features of the stanza may explain why, in the version of the legend in the recently discovered Abbotsford House manuscript, the stanza is identified as a *balade* rather than a *kalende*.⁴ *Balade* may indicate that this part of the legend is ripe for memorisation: it suggests that the stanza can stand apart from the narrative legend, as a separable if not discrete text, and it thereby underscores its potential and intended utility in regulating and recording devotional practice beyond the context of the legend itself. But the term emphasises formal aspects much more strongly than it does functional ones. *Balade* is the contemporary term for the stanza form used here, which in modern scholarship is more usually named rhyme royal.⁵ It is a high-style or self-consciously 'literary' form, associated by many fifteenth-century poets with Chaucer and Lydgate: that is, with the most ambitious and influential poets of the preceding periods.⁶ The very way in which late medieval poets refer to poetry 'in balade rime' as such is a mark of its specifically literary ambition: this kind of metatextual comment is a claim for the significance of poetic form, especially in the context of a form reserved for serious poetry. The identification of the verse form is not just classificatory here; the naming of the stanza as a *balade* draws attention to literary form per se, that is, to the stanza's aesthetic quality, perhaps even the pleasure to be derived from that quality, rather than its content, the quotidian religious regimen signalled by *kalende*.

I am interested in these two labels for Bokenham's stanza not because they set form and function in opposition, but because

they complicate this opposition as it informs our understanding of the category of 'literature', especially in relation to religion. Using Bokenham's *balade*-rhyme and the *kalende* that it contains as a point of departure, I want to suggest, in particular, that literary form is usefully understood in terms of the way it coordinates different categories of time – sacred and secular – and that this understanding of form can help us re-examine the relationship between 'literary' and instrumental texts, and thus the relationship between literature and religion, especially as this relationship has been defined through the paradigm of 'secularisation'.

Revisiting this paradigm is a key project of this volume, which in its very title counters an old expectation that literature and sanctity are antithetical. It thus takes up the critical debate about literature and 'secularisation' that has been revived in recent years in the context of new inquiry into the status of the secular by political theorists, sociologists, historians of religion, and literary scholars.⁷ This debate has challenged the assumption of an inevitable, teleological process by which textual cultures are stripped of premodern systems of belief while retaining quasi-religious claims to universal significance and deep meaning. As many of the essays in this volume demonstrate, scholars of literature – especially premodern literature – have much to offer this discussion, perhaps especially when they attend to the category of literary form because of the way that premodern texts themselves use form to explore the relationship between the sacred and the secular.

Turning to Bokenham's stanza, we might begin by noting a kind of ambivalence in its calendar function. On one hand, the term *kalende* points to the cycle of the year and more broadly to time as it is experienced in the *saeculum*, in secular time, the progressive time of human history, divided into days and years. The stanza explaining how many prayers a person should say each day in order to perform 11,000 across a year is addressed to the everyday and evanescent time of the *saeculum*, like a grocery list or an owner's manual.⁸ That is, it is secular in the medieval sense of the term: not defined in opposition to 'religion' but rather as a category of time, the time of human history and mortality. It is important to note that the stanza's secular function is correlative of its identification as an instrumental text: the term *kalende* identifies the stanza as a guide to secular protocols of behaviour. This secular regimen looks forward, however, to an extra-historical end. The prayer is an instrument, but it is an instrument of transcendence.

The quotidian practice of saying the Pater noster ensures access to salvation, to eschatological time, in which such daily routines, the cycles of the year, and the span of a human life are meaningless. Even at its most functional, then, the stanza is suspended between historical and ahistorical frames, between secular time and divine timelessness. In the Abbotsford House manuscript, the point of entry into this suspension is given a form – ballad rhyme – and a formal descriptor – *balade* – that points to its specifically literary quality.

Bokenham's stanza thus reminds us that categories of literary form are closely correlated to categories of time; indeed, that literary forms might very often be defined by the way that they affiliate or differentiate such categories.⁹ The slip between *kalende* and *balade* as formal descriptors is perhaps most interesting for the way it points not to a taxonomy of prosodic features (e.g. the metrical and rhyme pattern that define *balade rhyme*), nor to the presentation or conceptualisation of subject matter,¹⁰ but to the coordination of temporal orders. As an alternative to *kalende*, the term *balade* indexes the way that the devotional instructions in Bokenham's Ursula legend coordinate heavenly and earthly time: the days of the secular year, which provide a temporal structure within which to say the Pater noster 11,000 times, producing a metaphorical – and specifically temporal – image of the 11,000 virgins, who, in turn, ensure the supplicant's entrance into a heavenly timelessness. At the same time, on another level of the text, the *balade* marks the intersection of narrative time – the time of the story – and extradiegetic time – the time inhabited by the poem's contemporary readers. It coordinates the remote past of Ursula's martyrdom and an open-ended present-future time in which the audience is addressed and taught how to say 11,000 Pater noster in a calendar year.

Bokenham's stanza is not alone in suggesting that literary form operates as a structure that can accommodate or place into relation different kinds of time; we can identify it as an important capability of form across a broad swath of medieval literature. Secular love lyric, for example, uses its brevity to put in close relation quotidian, seasonal, and generational time.¹¹ Thematically, lyric emphasises the disjunction between the speaker's experience and these several kinds of time: the speaker – and, through him, humankind more generally – is defined by the temporality of his own desire, which is out of sync with the busy sexuality of the spring. So one of the Harley lyrics begins:

Lenten is come with love to toun,	Lent is come with love to town,
With blosmen and with briddes roun	With blossoms and with birds' song,
That all this blisse bringeth.	That brings all this bliss.
Dayeseyes in this dales	Daisies in these dales,
Notes swete of nightegales –	Sweet notes of nightin gales –
Uch foul song singeth.	Each bird sings a song.
The threstelcok him threteth o;	The thrush reproves himself incessantly:
Away is here winter wo	Away is their winter woe
When woderove springeth.	When the woodruff greens.
This foules singeth ferly fele,	These birds sing wonderfully often
And wliteth on here winne wele,	And warble about their happy fortune
That all the wode ringeth.	So that all the wood rings.
The rose railleth hire rode,	The rose blushes herself red,
The leves on the lighte wode	The leaves on the slender wood
Waxen all with wille.	All grow with appetite / pleasure.
The mone mandeth hire bleo,	The moon ordains her glow,
The lilie is lossom to seo,	The lily is lovely to see
The fenil and the fille.	The fennel and the chervil.
Wowes this wilde drakes;	These wild drakes woo;
Miles murgeth here makes,	Wild animals please their mates
Ase strem that striketh stille.	As a stream that softly penetrates.
Mody meneth, so doth mo;	A moody [man] laments, as do more;
Ichot ich am one of tho,	I know I am one of them
For love that likes ille.	For love that ill pleases.

The opening lines of the poem slide seamlessly from liturgical time, Lent, to seasonal time, the spring, represented in terms of

the cycle of seasons (the passing of winter) and a correlative cycle of sex, growth, and generation. But the unlikely identification of Lent with sensual pleasure and sexual satisfaction also recalls the differences between liturgical and seasonal time. Above all, the general celebration of springtime synchrony defines the speaker in terms of his alienation from these several kinds of time. He is unable to coordinate his feelings with the season, sorrowing in spite of the general 'bliss' that the spring brings, not because of Lenten mortifications or devotions that would give his suffering some purpose and value, but 'for love that likes ille'.¹²

The lyric speaker is unable to coordinate his habits even with the small-scale temporal unit of the day. Waking when he should sleep, his desire disorders the most basic category of time, the division of day and night. So in another Harley lyric:

Nightes when I wende and wake	Nights, when I turn and wake –
Forthy min wonges waxeth won	Therefore my cheeks grow pale,
Levedy, all for thine sake	Lady, all for your sake –
Longing is ilent me on	Longing has alit on me.

Desire alienates the speaker from every kind of shared temporality: the time of the day, of the seasons, and of the liturgical year. Lyric posits an irreducibly singular experience of time as the horizon of the self.

At the same time, lyric places these disparate times – diurnal, seasonal, liturgical, generational time, as well as the singular time of the speaker that runs athwart them all – in exceptional proximity through its small-scale form. The lyric theme of time out of joint is in an extended ironic relationship to lyric form: the categories of time, overlapping and at cross purposes with the speaker, are contained in the abbreviated form of the lyric, and coordinated, in the sense of put in syntagmatic relation to one another, through the speaker's own voice – the signature technology of lyric poetry. At the same time, lyric fashions this experience as a shared human condition, since any reader is welcome to adopt the first-person voice of the poem – a capability that 'Lenten is come' signals in the lines acknowledging that the speaker is only 'one of tho' who have this experience. As the example of love lyric suggests, medieval texts that we read as 'literature', broadly understood, are not readily sorted into the categories of 'secular' and 'religious' precisely because they coordinate both secular and religious time, often in

several varieties. To take one of the most complex examples: in the large arc of its plot, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* turns on complex relationships between a series of annual structures: the liturgical year, the cycle of seasons, and a period of human contract. The Green Knight's challenge is at once a Christmas game and an evocation of natural cycles of mortality and seasonal change. In the meanwhile, the repetition that structures the beheading game – Gawain will undergo the same experience as the Green Knight a year later – explores still more philosophical questions about chronology and historical change, a theme that frames the poem. Related questions on the level of individual ethics and ontology are raised as the poem shifts from the year to the day as the temporal structure for comparing human experience in the game within the game at Haut Desert. In making the day the governing category for exchange between Gawain and Bercilak – that is, for comparison or adequation of their experiences – their 'forward' asks whether time is a shared phenomenon, inhabited alike by any two people. The poem gives a negative answer, less in the mortal danger to which Gawain's final day exposes him when he keeps Lady Bercilak's belt in violation of his oath, than in the uneven narrative dilation of the bedroom and hunt scenes. The hunter and the hunted, of course, have very different experiences of time.

Modern categories that distinguish a 'secular' romance such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* from, say, a 'religious' dream vision such as *Pearl* had little traction for their original audiences, we know, but not because medieval people lived in a world so saturated by religion that everything fell under its aegis. These poems are linked rather by the fact that they address the same central problem: how to reconcile – or, better, how to act given the irreconcilability of – competing orders of time, some of which insist on rebirth (seasonal time, the cyclical structure of human history, the logic of conversion, confession, or baptism), some on the limits of mortal life (the fact of death, the differences between cultures across human history), and some on the uneven experience of time. Gawain's dilemma in Fitt 3 – a game based on the faulty premise that the day as experienced by one man can be equated to that same day as experienced by another – has an intimate relationship to the dilemma confronted by the speaker in *Pearl*, who wrong-headedly tries to equate the time of the Pearl Maiden's earthly existence (the spiritual merit she has accrued, the affective ties and social status that structured her experience of secular time) with the heavenly atemporality that she inhabits as a Bride of the Lamb.

It is no accident that these poems, which meditate so deeply on the difficulty of understanding and inhabiting multiple kinds of time, are also among the most formally complex in Middle English. Verse romance is given careful form in *Gawain* in order to coordinate disparate times, with its long alliterative lines that carry the story, the bob and wheel coda to each stanza which very often freezes its forward movement, the internal division of the romance into fitts that mark continuities, ruptures, and repetitions on the level of theme and action. The extraordinary formal complexity of *Pearl* – alliterative lines organised into 101 twelve-line stanzas, linked through concatenation into a perfect closed circle – is even more closely related to its exploration of two different temporal frameworks: the time of human affect and affiliation, of ethical merit, of mortality, and the static perfection of divine timelessness. The poem's intricate circular form simultaneously figures the Pearl Maiden's heavenly perfection, which removes her entirely from the ambit of the speaker's affection, and his own stubborn love for her, which is not resolved by the vision of her heavenly existence or the rigorous catechism she offers dismissing the value and meaning of earthly experience, and returns with full force at the end of the poem.

Form, then, may be one way to understand the relationship between literature and sanctity, and indeed literature and the 'secular'. I have argued that literary form worked in Middle English textual culture as a way to negotiate different kinds of time: the ahistorical and the historical, the eschatological and the chronological, an eternal present and an evanescent one. That is, literary form had a special role to play in putting sanctity in relation to the secular (that is, lived, mortal, and historical) lives of its audiences. Several of the essays in this volume provide case studies that explore the complex and multivalent ways in which medieval texts put pressure on the intersection of the instrumental and the transcendent, the quotidian and the timeless, especially through experiments in literary form. Kate Ash, for example, shows how Walter Bower's representation of Margaret of Scotland in the fifteenth-century *Scotichronicon* toggles between chronicle and dream vision to negotiate between spiritual and secular orders. Especially relevant and illuminating is her argument that Bower is interested in sanctity as a vehicle for both political and literary agendas. Margaret's sanctity is, on the one hand, instrumentalised for political purposes, in particular to assert Scottish sovereignty and craft a specifically national cultural memory. On the other – and

perhaps to mitigate somewhat this conspicuously instrumental use of Margaret's sanctity – it is the substance of literary ornament, contributing an aesthetic dimension unmoored from the exigencies of nationalist historiography. Importantly, Ash shows that literary form is the mechanism by which sanctity is repurposed for political ends: she explores Bower's use of the dream vision – Margaret's miraculous appearance to the knight John Wemyss, in which she announces that she will defend Scotland from the piratical Norwegian king Haakon IV – in terms of its dual genealogies in the spiritual vision and the traditions of political prophecy. Ash notes that the temporal marker coordinating earthly and divine frameworks – the *interea*, 'meanwhile', with which the episode begins – also signals a formal shift to a more self-consciously literary narrative mode.

Jessica Barr's [Chapter 4](#) essay addresses the 'divide between the personal and the general' in mystical writing.¹³ Through focused comparison of the narrative personae in the work of Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe, Barr shows us that the mystic's persona is caught between its historical particularity and its transhistorical, transpersonal status, available to other readers across time and space. Barr brings our attention to the secular, particular, and personal as the domain of feeling in these texts – whether it be Jesus's sensory apprehensions on the cross or the speaker's own emotional anguish – and to the transit of this feeling between persons, its availability to the reader as her own feeling. Where Rolle's direct address encourages the reader's full identification with the mystical voice of the text, and Kempe's external narration bars such identification, Julian's persona, poised delicately between her historical identity and her identification with her 'even Christen', both serves as a model for the reader's religious experience and remains separate from it. Having as it does the goal of the reader's spiritual improvement, devotional literature has as a distinctive, if not unique, concern the relationship between the particularity of ethics and that which transcends this particularity – which is, in Julian's case, both divine grace and participation in a shared human community.

Anna Siebach Larsen's [Chapter 11](#) essay on early hagio-biographies of Thomas More takes up the intersection of the ahistorical and historical by tracing the ways that *Lives* of More worked to reconcile a humanist commitment to historical singularity and hagiography's representation of sanctity and exemplarity, which unmoor the saint from a particular time through the timeless

ethical value and transcendent meaning of his life. The essay opens by emphasising how fashioning a 'coherent temporal narrative' is the primary challenge faced by More's early biographers, William Roper and Nicholas Harpsfield, and it emphasises how literary form, at various levels, provides the structure – the 'liminal space' – where the different conceptualisation of temporal and historical relationships are negotiated.¹⁴ Larsen also attends to material form – the printed book – and the new possibilities, and new problems, it presented to the conceptualisation of time: especially the challenge that the reproducibility of the printed book might present to a humanist commitment to historical singularity.

The temporal heterogeneity addressed in Anke Bernau's essay, [Chapter 8](#), is specifically literary: she explores the classical references and the representation of conversion in John Lydgate's *Life of Saints Alban and Amphibalus* as efforts to coordinate different kinds of temporality, especially around the question of poetic authority. Lydgate's self-deprecating self-comparison to Vergil and Cicero are not simply a classicising version of the humility topos, in Bernau's reading, but an invocation of a secular historical framework that Lydgate puts into relation with the sacred time represented by England's 'protomartyr', Albon. These relationships are marked by continuities and by ruptures, a complex of historiographic models that, Bernau argues, is 'stitched together' through the self-consciously literary stylistics of Lydgate's long legend, especially classical ideas of laureation and rhetorical 'colours'. Form on the level of the poem's architecture also has a role to play: the break between Book 1 and Book 2, at the moment the poem anticipates Albon's conversion, heralds a transformation of style that maps and manages the new temporal order of English Christianity.

Other essays map the conjunction of secular and saintly not within a text, but across traditions, but they too understand form as the mechanism by which these two frames are put in conversation. Jennifer Sisk in [Chapter 6](#) reads Chaucer's narrative persona as a secular version of the narratorial persona of saints' lives, imitating the hagiographic narrator in refusing to locate the authority of the text in himself. But where the narrator in saints' lives, in ostensible deference to institutional authority or absolute truth claims, produces a narrow, monolithic ethical paradigm, Chaucer – denied access to transcendent truth – takes advantage of this absence of an anchoring authority to develop a distinctly literary 'disinterestedness' and capaciousness that takes in multiple ethical positions and addresses multiple audiences. Helen Fulton's [Chapter 5](#) essay

focuses on the topos of debates between soul and body that appear in both religious and non-religious literary contexts, reading the latter as secular literary appropriations of a basic theological idea. As she surveys Irish, Welsh, and English iterations of the topos across a range of genres, Fulton shows that not only the Christian idea of the separability of the body and soul, but the dynamic debate form in which it was explored in key texts persists, even as it is repurposed to address broader questions about the competing claims of earthly desire and spiritual obligation – erupting as still broader comedy in the Welsh poet Iolo Goch's verse parody depicting the body as a drunken poet, whose soul advocates worldly pleasure. Andrew Lynch in [Chapter 2](#) reads vernacular saints' lives against a long-standing critical emphasis on the shared ethics of romance and saints' lives. He shows that even saints' lives that use military metaphors for religious heroism insist on the absolute spiritual priority of the saint over the knight. For Lynch, this intervention happens on the level of form: saints' lives apply 'critical pressure' to the ideals and practices of knighthood not through direct criticism but through revisions to the 'discursive strategies which in *chanson de geste* and romance connect knightly practices like deeds of arms and *courtoisie* with ideas of supreme excellence'.¹⁵

As these essays suggest, critical attention to form can help us to analyse more clearly the uneasy relationship between the normative and counter-normative claims that are constitutive of religion, that is, its ambivalent status as both a vehicle for a secular status quo and for challenges to it. Religious literature is often understood as a mystified endorsement of a secular order, as an instrument for enforcing moral or social norms or maintaining the political or economic power of a dominant class. At other times or in other contexts, religion is defined by its resistance to the normative protocols of a social or political order: in this way, it serves as an instrument for moral or social reform, or a warrant for political resistance that takes as its authority a higher law. It is perhaps in part this dual nature of religious texts, as normative and counter-normative, that has led to a critical emphasis on their instrumentality. Recent forms of historicist scholarship have, of course, insisted on the instrumental nature of all texts, including 'literary' ones, understood in terms of historically specific discursive practices. But an assumption that religious texts are somehow especially instrumental still underlies an opposition that distinguishes them from 'literature'.

Indeed, this opposition is at the root of the secularisation thesis, which defines the category of 'literature' in historical and

conceptual terms against religious texts understood to be determined by pastoral or political imperatives. According to a long-standing literary history, 'literature' as a category emerges when the instrumentality of an earlier 'religious' (and thus 'premodern') textual tradition is stripped away, leaving only the abstract claims to value or meaning that originally inhered in its affiliation with the sacred. In this paradigm, paradoxically, secularisation does not make imaginative literature more secular, at least not in the sense of more closely affiliated with the particular, local, historical, mundane. Indeed, the secularisation thesis has the curious effect of mystifying literature as transcendent. It assumes that what literature gets from sanctity is timelessness, the capacity to transcend mere utility, to transcend the particular audiences, institutions, political exigencies, and ideologies that might have informed its production, reception, and dissemination. Relevant here is Sarah James's astute diagnosis in [Chapter 7](#) of the critical reception of Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*, which – as she remarks – has gone underappreciated in literary scholarship both because it is a religious text (and hence an instrumental one) and because it borrows from secular romance. Capgrave's Katherine may be seen to instrumentalise a secular genre for a didactic or devotional end, compromising any claims to 'literary' status that depends on timeless meaning or value.

Many of the essays gathered here – especially Ash, Larsen, Tamara Atkin, Kate Greenspan, and Eva von Contzen – offer focused counter-histories that challenge the secularisation thesis. Read together, their resistance to this thesis as a heuristic reopens the category of 'literature', locating it in the intricate and ongoing oscillations between secular and sacred, rather than in the evacuation of an earlier religious sensibility. Ash in [Chapter 1](#), for example, shows how Bower presents the saintly Margaret as a kind of conduit by which Malcolm of Scotland's role as king and warrior endures: Margaret insists that her husband, though lacking any claim to sanctity himself, be translated with her. The sacred is here a vehicle for secular identity and authority, not its antithesis; indeed, it makes possible the persistence of the secular *past* in to the present. Reversing the teleological sequence in which religion is superseded by the secular, the secular moves into the present and towards the future by borrowing from sacred time. Larsen in [Chapter 11](#) also suggests a secular that inhabits, rather than replacing, a religious framework. She avoids the easy identification of humanist biography as a 'secularisation' of the saint's life, instead

following Harpsfield, More's hagiographer, in identifying him as a 'Protomartyr of all the laitie'.¹⁶ As she demonstrates, Harpsfield and others represent More's 'secular' accomplishments as evidence of the working of divine grace and special virtue, most strikingly in Cresacre More's inclusion of a list of More's books, rather than miracles, at the close of his *Life*. Here, as in Bernau's Chapter 8 reading of Lydgate, the formal architecture of the work embraces different temporal orders, in this case, by putting More's humanist accomplishments in relation to the evidence of sanctity usually provided by a saint's miracles.

Kate Greenspan's Chapter 3 essay also inverts the familiar construct of secularisation in one of its many manifestations: the teleological process by which a universal Christendom is superseded by a new national identification, creating a new secular orientation for identity and community. Greenspan demonstrates that Robert Mannyng uses national boundaries to frame the exempla in *Handlyng Synne*, providing an English focus that connects the narratives to his Anglophone audience and thus making their participation in a supranational Christianity dependent on their national identity, rather than the other way around. Her argument inverts the familiar construct of secularisation, by which saints' lives inform romance conventions, at the same time that it inverts the relationship between the universal and particular as they are put in chronological or conceptual sequence in the paradigm of secularisation. Rather than reading religious literature as the source of models of interiority or self-reflection later adapted by secular literature, Greenspan argues that, in Mannyng, the self-understanding necessary to Christian confession is based on a secular model of seeking.

Tamara Atkin's essay, Chapter 10, on the late medieval Digby play of *Mary Magdalen* and Lewis Wager's mid-sixteenth-century *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* takes a longer historical view in order to show that early modern drama is not less, but differently, 'religious' than medieval drama. Wager's rejection of the body as locus of religious spectacle and sacrament, Atkin argues, is not a stripping of doctrinal meaning or referents, but a 'conversion' of them to correspond to Reformed theology and practice. The nuanced analysis of the continuities and changes in the dramatic representation of sanctity follows from Atkin's awareness that there is no monolithic discourse of the body in medieval Christianity: her analysis avoids a reductive teleology by tracing not only the significant changes to religious culture in the

Reformation, but also the synchronic complexity in the Middle Ages, especially a theology of the body that saw it both as a vessel for sanctity and a vehicle for sin.

In [Chapter 9](#), Eva von Contzen's essay provides an especially bracing argument which rejects not only the secularisation thesis but also the definition of literature as non-instrumental which is, as we have seen, its correlative. Von Contzen argues for the greater literary value of fourteenth-century saints' lives on the very grounds of their instrumentality: specifically, their interest in using narrative to construct sanctity and make it available as a model to their audiences. Von Contzen contrasts the operations of these legends with later *Lives* by John Lydgate and other fifteenth-century hagiographers, who locate their saints from the beginning in a heavenly timelessness, in part to insist on the literary status of their own texts. Indeed, it is an irony of literary history that medieval poets are responsible for formulating an idea of the literary as timeless that underwrites the conceptual frameworks that exclude so much premodern literature from the category. Robert Meyer-Lee has recently traced the emergence of an idea of 'laureate' poetics, which claims a position outside secular politics, in the works of Chaucer, Hoccleve, Skelton, and others, and he has shown how claims for the timelessness of literature were significantly advanced by John Lydgate in the context of his religious poetry.¹⁷ Christopher Cannon, also turning to Lydgate, has shown how the appeal to an ahistorical, universal literary tradition in his work created a distinction between 'literature' and other kinds of writing – that is, instrumental writing – that was foundational to an English literary history conceived as such.¹⁸

The definition of the literary as timeless, universal, non-instrumental developed in the late Middle Ages has a very long afterlife, but it is, of course, only one possible and historically contingent way to conceptualise literature. This volume comprises many different definitions of literature: some essays associate the literary with narrative or rhetorical sophistication, or with formal ambition, others with 'disinterestedness', or a capacity for critique, or even more broadly with human imagination and creativity. This variety is a strength, making for a richer inquiry into the relations between sanctity and literature than a narrow orthodoxy might. Taken together, the essays point to and advance an on-going critical project of identifying a vernacular poetics from the ground up, and they offer – as I have tried to suggest here – fertile soil for thinking about the dialectic between the instrumental and

transcendent status of literature. This is a dialectic that we may be able to recognise in our own work as literary historians: if much of our scholarship works to identify the role of texts or traditions in a contingent historical frame, we also teach and write about literary texts on the assumption that they are *for* us; that they are not only documents of practice, reflective of historical coordinates that obtained long ago, but also texts that escape a simply instrumental and historically particular frame.

From this perspective, we can return to Bokenham, and recognise that there may be less difference between *kalende* and *balade* than we might at first suppose. If the first highlights the instrumental quality of the text and the second highlights its literary quality, these may nevertheless be compatible rather than contradictory ways to identify Bokenham's work. In this context, at least, the instrumental quality of the text is part of its claim *as* literature. Perhaps we can attribute this, in part, to genre: saints' lives may be the narrative form in which the two poles of the instrumental and the transcendent exert the most nearly equal force, featuring as they do a protagonist who inhabits both an earthly ethical and a transcendent spiritual domain. Or perhaps it is more generally a function of the basic way in which religion is, as its etymology suggests, a mechanism precisely for linking the secular and the transcendent, the practices of everyday life and some significance abstracted from it.¹⁹ For those of us, religious or not, who turn to literature for a similar capability, there may be a special appeal in a *kalende* in *balade* rhyme – in the capacity of literary form to put quotidian time, the temporal horizon of the self, in relation to other times, at more capacious scales.

Notes

- 1 Bokenham, an Austin friar known especially for his saints' lives, is part of an important fifteenth-century school of poetry that used self-consciously literary style for religious subjects. He is best known for his verse lives of female saints collected in British Library MS Arundel 327, known by its modern title, the *Legends of Holy Women*. The St Ursula legend is included in this collection, as well as in another collection of saints' lives recently identified as Bokenham's, discussed below. Bokenham follows his source, Jacopo de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, in the stanza under discussion here.
- 2 'Even' may also be translated as 'evenly': here, parcelled out equally across the year or performed steadily throughout the year: *Middle English Dictionary*, 'even, adv.', 15.

- 3 Mary Serjeantson (ed.), *Bokenham: Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, EETS O.S. 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), ll. 3559–65.
- 4 The Abbotsford House manuscript is a vernacular legendary, recently identified by Simon Horobin as Bokenham's 'long lost legendary' during the cataloguing of Walter Scott's library in 2005. It is almost certainly the collection of saints' lives to which Bokenham refers in his geographical treatise, the *Mappula Angliae*, and for which scholars had been searching since the nineteenth century: Horobin, 'Angle of Oblivion: A Lost Medieval Manuscript Discovered in Walter Scott's Library at Abbotsford', *Times Literary Supplement* (11 November 2005). The passage under discussion is found on fol. 208r.
- 5 See *Middle English Dictionary*, 'balade', 2.
- 6 Most relevant here is the use of rhyme royal in 'literary' saints' lives, including Chaucer's legend of St Cecilia, the *Second Nun's Tale*. Lydgate uses rhyme royal for shorter poetic lives such as his *St Margaret* and for long lives such as *Lives of Ss Alban and Amphibalus* and *Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund*. On Lydgate's lives, see Bernau, Chapter 8 in this volume, 'Lydgate's Sainly Poetics', pp. 151–71.
- 7 Some important contributions are Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), Vincent Pecora, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Charles Taylor, *The Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). See also the on-going debates posted on the SSRC blog, 'The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere' <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/> (last accessed 15 October 2013). Barbara Newman's important contribution to this debate, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), appeared just as this volume was going to press.
- 8 In a different kind of argument, we might analyse the function or instrumentality of this text in more political terms, as a regimen that insists on habituation into a normative protocol of belief that sustains the secular order, for example, as a contribution to Western ideologies of the patriarchal family. While that is not my project here, it is not antithetical to the rethinking of instrumental literature that I am concerned with in this context.
- 9 There is a substantial body of literary theory that addresses this relationship, but it is largely oriented around questions of narrative form, and especially the representation or structure of time in narrative. Some key texts include Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84–258; Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); and Paul Ricoeur, *Time and*

Narrative, 3 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). For an illuminating recent argument linking literary form and ideas of time, see Eleanor Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 134–54.

- 10 That is, the role of form as developed in Christopher Cannon's account of Aristotelian and Marxist definitions of form: Cannon, 'Form', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 177–90; and *The Grounds of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 3–10.
- 11 On time in the lyric tradition, see also Helen Barr, "'This holy tyme": Present Sense in the *Digby Lyrics*', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 307–23.
- 12 This alienation is a function of time in another way as well: the *wille* of the animal world is at once appetite and its satisfaction. It can be translated as desire or pleasure. The speaker's despair is a consequence of the delay, the temporal lag, between *wille* as desire and *wille* as pleasure, a lag that threatens to extend indefinitely.
- 13 Barr, Chapter 4 'Modelling Holiness', p. 81.
- 14 Larsen, Chapter 11 'Humanist Grammar', p. 209.
- 15 Lynch, Chapter 2 'Good knights', p. 49.
- 16 Larsen, 'Humanist Grammar', p. 214.
- 17 Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48. See also Sanok, 'Saints' Lives and the Literary After Arundel', in Gillespie and Ghosh, *After Arundel*, pp. 469–86.
- 18 Christopher Cannon, 'Monastic Productions', in David Wallace (ed.), *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 316–48.
- 19 Religion, from *religare*, 'to bind'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests that the etymology of the word is in fact uncertain, despite a general consensus around this association. Another possible derivation given by the *OED* is the one proposed by Cicero: religion derived from *re-legere*, 'to re-read', which is equally suggestive for the status of literature. My suggestion here that the first etymology points to the binding of earthly and transcendent domains is inspired by Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 7, where it serves as a basic example of Actor-Network Theory, that is, of human and non-human constituents of a complex system.

Bibliography

Primary sources

- Amours, F.J. (ed), *Andrew of Wyntoun, The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, 6 vols, STS 50, 53–4, 56–7, 63 (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903–14).
- Anderegg, Michael, ‘The Tradition of Early More Biography’, in R.S. Sylvester and Germain Marc’hadour (eds), *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), pp. 3–25.
- Anderson, A.O. (ed.), *Early Sources of Scottish History, 500 to 1286*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1922; repr. Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1990).
- Atkinson, Robert (ed.), *The Passions and Homilies from the Leabhar Breac* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1887).
- Bale, Anthony and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *John Lydgate’s Lives of St Edmund & Fremund and the Extra Miracles of St Edmund* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009).
- Barnum, Priscilla Heath (ed.), *Dives and Pauper*, EETS 275, 280, 323, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- Bartlett, Robert (ed.), *The Miracles of St Æbbe of Coldingham and St Margaret of Scotland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).
- Beadle, Richard (ed.), *The York Plays II*, EETS S.S. 24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Benson, Larry D. (ed.), *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- Best, R.I. et al. (eds), *The Book of Leinster*, 6 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1954–83).
- Bevington, David (ed.), *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975).
- Bossy, Michel-André (ed. and trans.), *Medieval Debate Poetry: Vernacular Works* (New York: Garland, 1987).
- Bossy, Michel-André, ‘Medieval Debates of Body and Soul’, *Comparative Literature* 28 (1976), pp. 144–63.
- Bower, Walter, *Scotichronicon*, gen. ed. D.E.R. Watt, 9 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987–1998).

- Brown, Carleton (ed.), *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).
- Burns, E. Jane (trans.), *The Quest for the Holy Grail, Lancelot-Grail 6* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2010).
- Capgrave, John, *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).
- Cent, Siôn, *Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, eds Henry Lewis et al. (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1937).
- Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991).
- Clancy, Joseph (trans.), *Medieval Welsh Lyrics* (London: Macmillan, 1965).
- Conlee, John W., *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology* (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1991).
- Davis, Norman (ed.), *The Play of the Sacrament*, in *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS S.S. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 58–89.
- Edwards, A.S.G., Katherine Gardiner Rodgers, and Clarence H. Miller (eds), *Life of Pico*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 51–123.
- Forbes-Leith, William (trans.), *The Life of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland*, by Turgot, Bishop of St Andrews (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1884).
- Fordun, John of, *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, ed. W.F. Skene, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871–72), facsimile reprint (Lampeter: Llanerch Press, 1993).
- Graesse, Theodor (ed.), *Jacobi a Voragine, Legenda aurea. Vulgo Historia Lombardica dicta*, 3rd edn (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1965 [1890]).
- Hamer, Richard (ed.), *Gilte Legende*, EETS O.S. 327–8, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006–7).
- Harpsfield, Nicholas, *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Moore, knight*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS O.S. 186 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963 [1932]).
- Haupt, G.E. (ed.), *Treatise upon the Passion, Treatise on the Blessed Body, Instructions and Prayers*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 13 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).
- Headley, John M. (ed.), *Responsio ad Lutherum*, 2 vols, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).
- Heningham, Eleanor K. (ed.), *An Early Latin Debate of the Body and Soul* (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1939).
- Horstmann, Carl (ed.), 'Richard Rolle's *Meditatio de Passione Domini*', in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard of Hampole, An English Father of the Church and His Followers* (New York: Macmillan, 1895).

- Horstmann, Carl (ed.), *John Capgrave: The Life of St Katharine of Alexandria*, EETS O.S. 100 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1893).
- Horstmann, Carl (ed.), *The Early South English Legendary*, EETS O.S. 87 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1887).
- Horstmann, Carl (ed.), *Barbour's, des Schottischen Nationaldichters Legendensammlung, nebst den Fragmenten seines Trojanerkrieges. Zum ersten Mal herausgegeben und kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1881).
- Jackson, Kenneth (trans.), *A Celtic Miscellany* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1973).
- Jarman, A.O.H. (ed.), *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1982).
- Johnston, Dafydd (ed.), *Iolo Goch: Poems* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1993).
- Johnston, Dafydd et al. (eds), *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 2010).
- Julian of Norwich, *Showings: From Vision to Book*, ed. Denise Nowakowski Baker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- Kempe, Margery, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 2000).
- Kenney, E.J. (ed.), *P. Ovidii Nasonis: Remedia Amoris, Amores, Medicamina Faciei Femineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 [1961]).
- Krapp, G.P. (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. Vol. III: *The Exeter Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936).
- Krapp, G.P. (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*. Vol. II: *The Vercelli Book* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932).
- Lauritis, J.A., R.A. Klinefelter, and V.F. Gallagher (eds), *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady*, Duquesne Studies Philological Series 2 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1961), Part III, <http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=chadwyckep/uvaGenText/tei/chep1.1702.xml> (accessed 20 January 2014).
- Lecoy, Félix (ed.), *Le Conte du Graal (Perceval)* (Paris: Champion, 1975).
- Lefèvre d'Etaples, Jacques, *De tribus et unica Magdalena disceptatio secunda* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1519).
- Lefèvre d'Etaples, Jacques, *De Maria Magdalena et triduo Christi disceptatio* (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1518).
- Lumiansky, R.M., and David Mills (eds), *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, Vol. 2, EETS S.S. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- Lydgate, John, *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*, ed. George F. Reinecke, Garland Medieval Texts 11 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).
- Lydgate, John, *The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. J.E. van der Westhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1974).
- Lydgate, John *The Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 121, 122, 123, 124, 4 vols (London, 1924–7).

- Lydgate, John, *Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 97, 103, 106, 3 vols (London, 1906–10).
- Lydgate, John, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS E.S. 77, 83, 92 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1889–1904).
- MacCracken, Henry Noble (ed.), *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part 1*, EETS E.S. 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911 for 1910).
- Maggioni, Giovanni Paolo (ed.), *Iacopo da Varazze: Legenda Aurea*, 2 vols (Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998).
- Malory, Thomas, *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. Eugene Vinaver, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
- Mannyn of Brunne, Robert, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1996).
- Mannyn of Brunne, Robert, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Idelle Sullens (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1983).
- Mannyn of Brunne, Robert, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 119, 123 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1901–3).
- Mapes, Walter, *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, by Thomas Wright (London: Camden Society, 1841).
- Martz, L.L., and F. Manley (eds), *A Dialogue of Comfort*, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 12 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).
- Meech, Stanford Brown, and Hope Emily Allen (eds), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, EETS 212 (London: Oxford University Press, 1961 [1940]).
- Metcalfe, William M. (ed.), *Legends of the Saints in the Scottish Dialect of the Fourteenth Century*, 3 vols, STS 1st ser. 13, 18, 23, 25, 35, 37 (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1896).
- Miller, C.H. (ed.), *De Tristitia Christi*, 2 vols, in *The Complete Works of Thomas More*, Vol. 14 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).
- Monmouth, Geoffrey of, *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. Neil Wright (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985).
- Mooney, Linne et al. (eds), *Digital Index of Middle English Verse*, www.cddc.vt.edu/host/imev/record.php?recID=605 (accessed 20 February 2013).
- Parry, Thomas (ed.), *Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).
- Picard, Jean-Michel (trans.), *The Vision of Tnugdál* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1989).
- Powell, Susan (ed.), *John Mirk's Festial*, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Reames, Sherry (ed.), 'John Lydgate, *The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete*', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 2003), pp. 146–68.

- Ro. Ba. *The Lyfe of Syr Thomas More, Sometyms Lord Chancellor of England*, eds Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock and P.E. Hallett, EETS O.S. 222 (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).
- Roper, William, *The Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, knyghte*, ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock, EETS O.S. 197 (London: Oxford University Press, 1958 [1935]).
- Roques, Mario (ed.), *Le Chevalier au Lion (Yvain)* (Paris: Champion, 1978).
- Schuster, Louis A., Richard C. Marius, James P. Lusardi, and Richard J. Schoeck (eds), *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, 3 vols, in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, Vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).
- Serjeantson, Mary (ed.), *Bokenham: Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, EETS O.S. 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).
- Skeat, W.W. (ed.), *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, 2 vols, EETS O.S. 76 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1881).
- Spector, Stephen (ed.), *The N-Town Play. Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, EETS S.S. 11, 12, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Stapleton, Thomas, *The Life and Illustrious Martyrdom of Sir Thomas More*, ed. E.E. Reynolds, trans. Philip E. Hallett (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966).
- Stevens, Martin and A.C. Cawley (eds), *The Towneley Plays II*, EETS S.S. 14 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Stokes, Whitley (ed.), *Fís Adamnáin* (Simla: Station Press, 1870).
- Virgil, *Georgics*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- Virgil, *The Georgics*, trans. L.P. Wilkinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982).
- Voragine, Jacobus de, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
- Wager, Lewis, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, in Paul Whitfield White (ed.), *Reformation Drama in England: The Life and Repentaunce of Mary Magdalene, The History of Jacob and Esau* (London: Garland, 1992), pp. 1–66.
- Wager, Lewis, *A New Enterlude, Neuer Before thys Tyme Imprinted, Entreating of the Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (London: John Charlewood, 1566; STC 24932).
- Wagner, Albrecht (ed.), *Visio Thugdali: Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1882).
- Watson, Nicholas, and Jacqueline Jenkins (eds), *The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2006).
- Whatley, E. Gordon, Anne B. Thompson, and Robert K. Upchurch (eds), *Saints' Lives in Middle English Collections* (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS Medieval Institute Publications, 2004).
- Windisch, Ernst (ed.), *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1880).

Secondary sources

- Ackerman, Robert W., 'The Debate of the Body and Soul and Parochial Christianity', *Speculum* 37 (1962), pp. 541–65.
- Ackroyd, Peter, *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* (New York and London: Doubleday, 2003).
- Aers, David, and Lynn Staley (eds), *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996).
- Aitken, Adam J., *The Older Scots Vowels: A History of the Stressed Vowels of Older Scots from the Beginnings to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Caroline Macafee, STS 5th ser. 1 (Glasgow: Booksource, 2002).
- Alexander, Dominic David, 'Hermits, Hagiography, and Popular Culture: A Comparative Study of Durham Cathedral Priory's Hermits in the Twelfth Century' (PhD dissertation, Queen Mary, University of London, 2000).
- Allen, Elizabeth, *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Later Middle English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2005).
- Anderegg, Michael, 'The Tradition of Early More Biography', in R.S. Sylvester and Germain Marc'hadour (eds), *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), pp. 3–25.
- Anderegg, Michael, 'Utopia and Early More Biography: Another Review', *Moreana* 33 (1972), pp. 23–9.
- Anderson, Judith, *Biographical Truth: The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).
- Arthur, Karen, 'Equivocal Subjectivity in Chaucer's Second Nun's Prologue and Tale', *Chaucer Review* 32.3 (1998), pp. 217–31.
- Asad, Talal, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- Ashley, Kathleen M., 'Titivillus and the Battle of Words in *Mankind*', *Annuaire Mediaevale* 16 (1975), pp. 128–50.
- Ashton, Gail, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Atkin, Tamara, *The Drama of Reform: Theology and Theatricality, 1461–1553* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
- Attridge, Derek, *The Singularity of Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004).
- Badir, Patricia, *The Maudlin Impression: English Literary Images of Mary Magdalene, 1550–1700* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).
- Badir, Patricia, "'To allure vnto their loue": Iconoclasm and Striptease in Lewis Wager's *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*', *Theatre Journal* 51 (1999), pp. 1–20.
- Baker, Donald C. and J.L. Murphy, 'The Books of Myles Blomefylde', *The Library* 31 (1976), pp. 377–85.

- Baker, Donald C., John L. Murphy, and Louis B. Hall Jr. (eds), 'Mary Magdalen', in *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian Library MSS. Digby 133 and E Museo 160*, EETS O.S. 283 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 24–95.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, 'Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84–258.
- Bale, Anthony, 'Introduction: St Edmund's Medieval Lives', in Anthony Bale (ed.), *St Edmund, King and Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), pp. 1–25.
- Barr, Helen, '"This holy tyme": Present Sense in the *Digby Lyrics*', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 307–23.
- Barr, Jessica, *Willing to Know God: Dreamers and Visionaries of the Later Middle Ages* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2010).
- Barrow, G.W.S., 'Margaret [St Margaret] (d. 1093)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18044 (accessed 17 July 2012).
- Bartlett, Robert, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
- Baswell, Christopher, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Batt, Catherine, 'Henry, Duke of Lancaster's Book of Holy Medicines: The Rhetoric of Knowledge and Devotion', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 47 (2006), pp. 407–14.
- Beckwith, Sarah, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- Beier, Benjamin V., 'The Subordination of Humanism: Young More's "Profitable" Work, *The Life of John Picus*', *Moreana* 47.1 (2010), pp. 23–44.
- Bennett, Andrew and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 4th edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2009).
- Bennett, Jacob, 'The Mary Magdalene of Bishop's Lynn', *Speculum* 75 (1978), pp. 1–9.
- Bernau, Anke, 'A Christian Corpus: Virginité, Violence and Knowledge in the Life of St Katherine of Alexandria', in Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (eds), *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 109–30.
- Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Renate, and Timea Szell (eds), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

- Boehnen, Scott, 'The Aesthetics of "Sprawling Drama": The Digby *Mary Magdalene* as Pilgrim's Play', *Journal of English and German Philology* 98 (1999), pp. 325–53.
- Boitani, Piero (ed.), *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Borch, Marianne, 'Poet & Persona: Writing the Reader in *Troilus*', *Chaucer Review* 30.3 (1996), pp. 215–28.
- Boswell, Charles S., *An Irish Precursor of Dante* (London: D. Nutt, 1908).
- Boswell, Jackson Campbell, *Sir Thomas More in the English Renaissance: An Annotated Catalogue* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994).
- Brandon, S.G.F., *The Judgment of the Dead* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967).
- Bremond, Claude, *Logique du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).
- Brooks, Cleanth, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, 1947).
- Broun, Dauvit, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain: From the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- Brown, Carleton, 'The Prologue of Chaucer's "Lyf of Seint Cecile"', *Modern Philology* 9.1 (1911), pp. 1–16.
- Brown, Michael, *The Wars of Scotland 1214–1371* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
- Brownlee, Kevin, Tony Hunt, Ian Johnson, Alastair Minnis, Nigel F. Palmer, and James Simpson, 'Vernacular Literary Consciousness c. 1100–c. 1500: French, German and English Evidence', in Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2: *The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 422–71.
- Bush, Jerome, 'The Resources of *Locus* and *Platea* Staging: The Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *Studies in Philology* 86 (1989), pp. 139–65.
- Cannon, Christopher, 'Monastic Productions', in David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 316–48.
- Carley, James P., 'John Leland and the Contents of English Pre-Dissolution Libraries: The Cambridge Friars', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1986), pp. 90–100.
- Clarke, James G., Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn McKinley (eds), *Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Clogan, Paul (ed.), Special issue 'Medieval Hagiography and Romance', *Mediaevalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975).
- Clopper, Lawrence, *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
- Clopper, Lawrence, 'Communitas: The Play of Saints in Late Medieval and Tudor England', *Mediaevalia* 18 (1995), pp. 81–109.

- Clopper, Lawrence, with Clifford Davidson and Elizabeth Baldwin, 'Issues in Review: Saint Plays', *Early Theatre* 1 (1998), pp. 97–116.
- Coldeway, John, 'The Digby Plays and the Chelmsford Records', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 18 (1975), pp. 103–21.
- Coleman, Joyce, 'Strange Rhyme: Prosody and Nationhood in Robert Mannyng's *Story of England*', *Speculum* 78 (2003), pp. 1214–38.
- Coletti, Theresa, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
- Coletti, Theresa, "'Curtesy doth it yow lere": The Sociology of Transgression in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *English Literary History* 71 (2004), pp. 1–28.
- Coletti, Theresa, "'*Paupertas est donum Dei*": Hagiography, Lay Religion, and the Economics of Salvation in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *Speculum* 76 (2001), pp. 337–78.
- Coletti, Theresa, 'The Design of the Digby Play of *Mary Magdalene*', *Studies in Philology* 76 (1979), pp. 313–33.
- Conrad, F.W., 'Manipulating Reputations: Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Elyot, and the Conclusion of William Roper's *Lyfe of Sir Thomas Moore, Knighte*', in Thomas F. Mayer and D.R. Woolf (eds), *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 133–61.
- Cooper, Lisa H., *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Copeland, Rita, *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Copeland, Rita, and Peter T. Struck (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Cowen, J.M., 'Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women": Structure and Tone', *Studies in Philology* 82 (1985), pp. 416–36.
- Crawford, Charles 'Stapleton and More's "Letter to Bugenhagen" (continued)', *Moreana* 26 (1970), pp. 5–16.
- Crawford, Charles, 'Stapleton and More's "Letter to Bugenhagen"', *Moreana* 19–20 (1968), pp. 101–7.
- Crewe, Jonathan V., 'The "Encomium Moriae" of William Roper', *English Literary History* 55.2 (1988), pp. 287–307.
- Damon, John Edward, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
- Davenport, Tony, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Davidson, Clifford, 'The Middle English Saint Play and Its Iconography', in Clifford Davidson (ed.), *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, EDAM Monograph Series 8 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), pp. 31–122.

- Dearnley, Elizabeth, "On Englyssh Tunge Out of Frankys": Translation and "Tourneying" in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, *Marginalia* 14 (2010–11), www.marginalia.co.uk/journal/12cambridge (accessed 30 August 2013).
- Delaney, John J., 'Magnus Erlendsson, Earl of Orkney', *Dictionary of Saints* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 373.
- Delany, Sheila, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Delany, Sheila, 'Politics and the Paralysis of Poetic Imagination in the *Physician's Tale*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 3 (1981), pp. 47–60.
- Delehaye, Hippolyte, *Les Légendes Grecques des saints militaires* (Paris: Picard, 1909).
- Dillon, Anne, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535–1603* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- Ditchburn, David, 'The "McRoberts Thesis" and Patterns of Sanctity in Late Medieval Scotland', in Steve Boardman and Eila Williamson (eds), *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 177–94.
- Dottin, Georges, 'Une version irlandaise du *Dialogue du corps et de l'âme*, attribué à Robert Grosseteste', *Revue Celtique* 23 (1902), pp. 1–39.
- Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996).
- Ebin, Lois A., *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).
- Eggebrotten, Anne, 'Laughter in the *Second Nun's Tale*: A Redefinition of the Genre', *Chaucer Review* 19.1 (1984), pp. 55–61.
- Emerson, Jan Swango, 'Harmony, Hierarchy, and the Senses in the *Vision of Tundal*', in Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss (eds), *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 3–46.
- Empson, William, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930).
- Evans, Suzanne, 'The Scent of a Martyr', *Numen* 49.2 (2002), pp. 193–211.
- Fanous, Samuel, and Vincent Gillespie (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Ferguson, Mary, 'The Structure of the Soul's Address to the Body in Old English', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 69 (1970), pp. 72–80.
- Findon, Joanne, *Lady, Hero, Saint: The Digby Play's Mary Magdalene*, *Studies and Texts* 173 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2011).
- Floyd, Jennifer, 'St George and the "Steyned Halle": Lydgate's Verse for the London Armourers', in Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 139–64.

- Fredeman, Jane C., 'Style and Characterization in John Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 62 (1980), pp. 346–87.
- Fulton, Rachel, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- Fyler, John M., *Chaucer and Ovid* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).
- Gaidoz, Henri, 'Le Débat du corps and de l'âme en Irlande', *Revue Celtique* 10 (1889), pp. 463–70.
- Galloway, Andrew, 'The Medieval Literary', in Frank Grady and Andrew Galloway (eds), *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2013), pp. 1–12.
- Galloway, Andrew, 'John Lydgate and the Origins of Vernacular Humanism', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107 (2008), pp. 445–71.
- Gardiner, Eileen, *Visions of Heaven and Hell: A Sourcebook* (New York: Garland, 1993).
- Gardiner, Eileen, *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante* (New York: Italica Press, 1989).
- Garth, Helen Meredith, *Saint Mary Magdalene in Mediaeval Literature*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science 67, 3 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1950).
- Gayk, Shannon, *Image, Text and Religious Reform in Fifteenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Gayk, Shannon, and Kathleen Tonry (eds), *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).
- Genette, Gérard, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).
- Gerould, G.H., 'The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale', in W.F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (eds), *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), pp. 664–84.
- Gibson, Gail McMurray, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989).
- Gillespie, Alexandra, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and their Books 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Gillespie, Vincent, 'Venus in a Sackcloth: The Digby *Mary Magdalen and Wisdom*', in Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 72–92.
- Gillespie, Vincent, 'From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450', in Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2: *The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 145–235.

- Gillespie, Vincent, and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).
- Ginsberg, Warren, *Chaucer's Italian Tradition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).
- Good, Jonathan, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009).
- Grady, Frank, and Andrew Galloway (eds), *Answerable Style: The Idea of the Literary in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2013).
- Grantley, Darryll, 'Saints and Miracles', in Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 263–86.
- Grantley, Darryll, 'Producing Miracles', in Paula Neuss (ed.), *Aspects of Early English Drama* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), pp. 78–91.
- Green, Richard Firth, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
- Greenblatt, Stephen (ed.), *Allegory and Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).
- Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
- Greene, James J. 'Utopia and Early More Biography', *Moreana* 31–2 (1971), pp. 199–208.
- Gregory, Brad S., *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Grossi, Joseph L., 'The Unhidden Piety of Chaucer's "Seint Cecilie"', *Chaucer Review* 36.3 (2002), pp. 298–309.
- Gust, Geoffrey W., *Constructing Chaucer: Author and Autofiction in the Critical Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- Habermas, Jürgen, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).
- Hahn, Cynthia, *Portrayed on the Heart: Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of Saints from the Tenth through the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- Haldane, John, 'Soul and Body', in Robert Pasnau (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 291–304.
- Happé, Peter, 'The Protestant Adaptation of the Saint Play', in Clifford Davidson (ed.), *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, EDAM Monograph Series 8 (Kalamazoo: MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986).
- Harding, Wendy, 'Body into Text: *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in Sarah Stanbury and Linda Lomperis (eds), *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 168–87.

- Haskins, Susan, *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (London: Harper Collins, 1993).
- Heffernan, Thomas J., *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Helle, Knut, 'The Norwegian Kingdom: Succession Disputes and Consolidation', in Knut Helle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, Vol. 1: *Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 369–91.
- Heng, Geraldine, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
- Herbert, Máire, 'Medieval Collections of Ecclesiastical and Devotional Materials: *Leabhar Breac*, *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* and *The Book of Fenagh*', in Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhan Fitzpatrick (eds), *Treasures of the Royal Academy Library* (Dublin, 2009), pp. 33–43.
- Hillers, Barbara, 'Voyages between Heaven and Hell: Navigating the Early Irish *Immram* Tales', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 13 (1993), pp. 66–81.
- Horobin, Simon, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham', *Speculum* 82 (2007), pp. 932–49.
- Horobin, Simon, 'Angle of Oblivion: A Lost Medieval Manuscript Discovered in Walter Scott's Library at Abbotsford', *Times Literary Supplement* (11 November 2005).
- Hulse, Clark, 'Dead Man's Treasure: The Cult of Thomas More', in David Lee Miller, Sharon O'Dair, and Harold Weber (eds), *The Production of English Renaissance Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 190–225.
- Humphreys, K.W. (ed.), *The Friars' Libraries*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 1 (London: British Library, 1990).
- Huneycutt, Lois, 'The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The *Life of St Margaret* in the Reign of Matilda II (1100–1118)', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1989), pp. 81–97.
- Hunter, Jerry, 'Professional Poets and Personal Insults: *Ad Hominem* Attacks in Medieval Welsh *Ymrysonau*', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 13 (1993), pp. 54–65.
- Huws, Daniel, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 2000).
- Innes-Parker, Catherine, 'Sexual Violence and the Female Reader: Symbolic "Rape" in the Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group', *Women's Studies* 24.3 (1995), pp. 205–17.
- Jakobson, Roman, *Selected Writings*, 7 vols (The Hague: Mouton, 1981).
- James, Sarah, 'John Capgrave and Osbern Bokenham: Verse Saints' Lives', in Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *A Companion to Fifteenth-Century English Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), pp. 99–112.

- James, Sarah, "Doctryne and studie": Female Learning and Religious Debate in Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*', *Leeds Studies in English* n.s. 36 (2005), pp. 275–302.
- Jameson, Fredric, *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).
- Jankofsky, Klaus, 'National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (eds), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 81–93.
- Jansen, Katherine Ludwig, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Jarman, A.O.H., *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin: The Black Book of Carmarthen* (London: British Academy, 1986).
- Jeffrey, David Lyle, 'English Saints' Plays', in Neville Denny (ed.), *Medieval Drama*, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 16 (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 69–89.
- Johnson, Eleanor, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
- Jones, R.M., *Llên Cymru a Chrefydd: Diben y Llenor* (Abertawe: Christopher Davies, 1977).
- Jones, R.M., 'Ymryson ac ymddiddan corff ac enaid', in J.E. Caerwyn Williams (ed.), *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* 5 (Dinbych: Gwasg Gee, 1970), pp. 44–61.
- Kaeuper, Richard W., *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).
- Kamath, Stephanie A. Viereck Gibbs, 'John Lydgate and the Curse of Genius', *Chaucer Review* 45.1 (2010), pp. 32–58.
- Karnes, Michelle, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- Ker, Neil R., 'Cardinal Cervini's Manuscripts from the Cambridge Friars', in Raymundus Creytens and Pius Künzle (eds), *Xenia Medii Aevi Historiam Illustrantia*, 2 vols (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 61–71.
- Ker, Neil R. (ed.), *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edn (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964).
- Kieckhefer, Richard, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- King, John, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
- Knight, Rhonda, 'Stealing Stonehenge: Translation, Appropriation, and Cultural Identity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32.1 (2002), pp. 41–58.

- Kolve, V.A., 'Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale* and the Iconography of Saint Cecilia', in Donald M. Rose (ed.), *New Perspectives in Chaucer Criticism* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1981), pp. 137–74.
- Kruger, Steven F., 'Dialogue, Debate, and Dream Vision', in Larry Scanlon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 71–82.
- Lacan, Jacques, *Écrits: A Selection* (London: Tavistock, 1977).
- Latour, Bruno, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Lawton, David, 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century', *English Literary History* 54.4 (1987), pp. 761–99.
- Le Goff, Jacques, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London: Scolar, 1984).
- Lemon, Lee T., and Marion J. Reis (eds), *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).
- Levinson, Marjorie, 'What is New Formalism?', *PMLA* 122.2 (2007), pp. 558–69.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966).
- Lewis, Henry, 'Dadl yr Enaid a'r Corff', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 3 (1926–27), pp. 119–22.
- Lewis, Katherine J., *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000).
- Lewis, Katherine J., 'Model Girls? Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Women in Late Medieval England', in Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge, and Kim M. Phillips (eds), *Young Medieval Women* (New York: St Martin's, 1999), pp. 25–46.
- Lifshitz, Felice, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative,' *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 95–113.
- Little, K.C., *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).
- Lucas, Peter, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997).
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard, *Afterlives of the Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).
- Lynch, Andrew, 'Genre, Bodies and Power in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: *King Horn*, *Havelok*, and the *South English Legendary*', in Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (eds), *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 177–96.
- McAvoy, Liz Herbert, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

- McConica, James K., 'The Recusant Reputation of Thomas More', in R.S. Sylvester and Germain Marc'hadour (eds), *Essential Articles for the Study of Thomas More* (Hamden: Archon, 1977), pp. 136–49.
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London: Penguin, 2009).
- McIlroy, Claire Elizabeth, *The English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).
- McJannet, Linda, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions: The Evolution of a Theatrical Code* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999).
- McKenna, Catherine, *The Medieval Welsh Religious Lyric* (Belmont, MA: Ford and Bailie, 1991).
- McKenna, Lambert, 'Some Irish Bardic Poems: XXVII. The Soul Riding the Body', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 22 (1933), pp. 406–8.
- McKenna, Lambert, 'Some Irish Bardic Poems: IV. The Body the Soul's Horse', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 16 (1927), pp. 592–4.
- Mac Mathúna, Séamus, *Immram Brain. Bran's Journey to the Land of Women* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985).
- McRoberts, David, 'The Scottish Church and Nationalism in the Fifteenth Century', *Innes Review* 19 (1968), pp. 3–14.
- Maguire, John, 'William Roper's *Life of More*: The Working Methods of a Tudor Biographer', *Moreana* 23 (1969), pp. 59–66.
- Marc'hadour, Germain, 'Latin Lives of Thomas More', in A.D. Cousins and Damian Grace (eds), *A Companion to Thomas More* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), pp. 21–38.
- Marc'hadour, Germain, 'Thomas Stapleton's Use of More's *English Works* (1557) in his *Vita Thomae Mori* (1588)', *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis: Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp. 83–90.
- Matonis, A.T.E., 'Later Medieval Poetics and Some Welsh Bardic Debates', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 29 (1982), pp. 635–65.
- Medvedev, P.N., and M.M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
- Meyer-Lee, Robert J., 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010), pp. 322–48.
- Meyer-Lee, Robert J., *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Middleton, Anne, 'William Langland's "Kynde Name": Authorial Signature and Social Identity in Late Fourteenth-Century England', in Lee Patterson (ed.), *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 15–82.
- Middleton, Anne, 'Chaucer's "New Men" and the Good of Literature in the *Canterbury Tales*', in Edward W. Said (ed.), *Literature and Society* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 15–56.

- Middleton, Anne, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II', *Speculum* 53 (1978), pp. 94–114.
- Middleton, Anne, 'The *Physician's Tale* and Love's Martyrs: "Ensamples mo than ten" as a Method in the *Canterbury Tales*', *Chaucer Review* 8 (1973), pp. 9–32.
- Miller, Jacqueline T., *Poetic License: Authority and Authorship in Medieval and Renaissance Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- Miller, James I., 'Lydgate the Hagiographer as Literary Artist', in Larry D. Benson (ed.), *The Learned and the Lewed, Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, Harvard English Studies 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 279–90.
- Miller, Joseph Hillis, *Reading Narrative* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).
- Mills, Robert, 'The Early *South English Legendary* and Difference: Race, Place, Language, and Belief', in Kimberly Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (eds), *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 197–222.
- Minnis, A.J., *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).
- Minnis, A.J., and Ian Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2: *The Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Minnis, A.J., and A.B. Scott (eds), with the assistance of David Wallace, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
- Mitchell, Juliet, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).
- Monta, Susannah Brietz, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Mooney, Catherine M. (ed.), *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).
- Morris, Colin, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B. (ed.), *The Invention of Saintliness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Mulder-Bakker, Anneke B., 'The Invention of Saintliness: Texts and Contexts', in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *The Invention of Saintliness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 3–23.
- Murray, Kylie, 'Dream and Vision in Scotland, c. 1375–c. 1500' (PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, 2013).
- Murray, Kylie, 'Dream and Vision in Late-Medieval Scotland: The Epic Case of William Wallace', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 29 (2009), pp. 177–98.

- Muscatine, Charles, *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).
- Newman, Barbara, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013).
- Newman, Barbara, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
- Nisse, Ruth, "Was it not Routhe to Se?" Lydgate and the Styles of Martyrdom', in Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 279–98.
- Nolan, Maura, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- O'Connell, Michael, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- O'Connell, M.R., *Thomas Stapleton and the Counter Reformation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964).
- Ormrod, W.M., 'Henry of Lancaster, First Duke of Lancaster (c. 1310–1361)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com (accessed 17 December 2012).
- O'Sullivan, Katherine K., 'John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*: Translation and Authority in Fifteenth-Century England', *Mediaevalia* 26.2 (2005), pp. 169–201.
- Patterson, Lee, *Putting the Wife in Her Place*, The William Matthews Lectures (London: Birkbeck College, 1995).
- Patterson, Lee, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
- Patterson, Lee, "What Man Artow?": Authorial Self-definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 11 (1989), pp. 117–75.
- Pearsall, Derek, 'The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century', in Helen Cooney (ed.), *Nature, Court and Culture. New Essays on Fifteenth-Century Poetry* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 15–27.
- Pearsall, Derek, 'John Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine* and Popular Romance Style', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975), pp. 121–37.
- Pearsall, Derek, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).
- Pecora, Vincent, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
- Peters, Julie Stone, *Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Pettegree, Andrew, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Phelpstead, Carl, 'King, Martyr and Virgin: *Imitatio Christi* in Ælfric's Life of St Edmund', in Anthony Bale (ed.), *St Edmund, King and Martyr* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), pp. 27–44.

- Phillips, S.E., *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007).
- Pineas, Rainer, *Thomas More and Tudor Polemics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968).
- Prescott, Anne Lake, 'Afterlives', in George M. Logan (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 265–87.
- Quistorp, Hildeburg, 'Studien zu Lydgates Heiligenlegenden' (PhD dissertation, Bonn, 1951).
- Rabin, Andrew, 'Bede, Drythelm, and the Witness to the Other World: Testimony and Conversion in the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Modern Philology* 106 (2009), pp. 375–98.
- Raby, F.J.E., *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).
- Ransom, Crowe, *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1951).
- Reames, Sherry, 'The Second Nun's Prologue and Tale', in Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (eds), *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 491–527.
- Richards, I.A., *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1924).
- Riches, Samantha, and Sarah Salih (eds), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- Ricoeur, Paul, *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
- Riddy, Felicity, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', in Ann M. Hutchinson (ed.), *Editing Women: The Thirty-First Annual Conference on Editorial Problems* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 101–24.
- Ritchie, Harry M., 'A Suggested Location for the Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *Theatre Survey* 4 (1963), pp. 51–8.
- Robertson, D.W., *Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).
- Robertson, Elizabeth, 'Apprehending the Divine and Choosing to Believe: Voluntarist Free Will in Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale*', *Chaucer Review* 46.1–2 (2011), pp. 111–30.
- Roscow, Gregory, *Syntax and Style in Chaucer's Poetry*, *Chaucer Studies* VI (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1980).
- Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
- Salih, Sarah, 'Introduction: Saints, Cults and "Lives" in Medieval England', in Sarah Salih (ed.), *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 1–23.
- Sanderlin, George, 'John Capgrave Speaks up for the Hermits', *Speculum* 18.3 (1943), pp. 258–62.

- Sanok, Catherine, 'Saints' Lives and the Literary after Arundel', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 469–86.
- Sanok, Catherine, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
- Sanok, Catherine, 'Performing Feminine Sanctity in Late Medieval England: Parish Guilds, Saints' Plays, and the *Second Nun's Tale*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32.2 (2002), pp. 269–303.
- Sanok, Catherine, 'The Geography of Genre in the *Physician's Tale* and *Pearl*', *New Medieval Literatures* 5 (2002), pp. 177–201.
- Sanok, Catherine, 'Reading Hagiographically: The *Legend of Good Women* and its Feminine Audience', *Exemplaria* 13 (2001), pp. 323–54.
- Saxer, Victor, *Le Culte de Marie Madeleine en occident: des origines à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire 3 (Auxerre-Paris: Publications de la société des fouilles archéologiques et des monuments historiques de l'Yonne, 1959).
- Scahill, John (ed.), *Middle English Saints' Legends*, Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005).
- Scheibe, Regina, "'Idilnes Giffis Novrysingis to Vicis': The Prologue of the Scottish Legends of the Saints", in L.A.J.R. Houwen (ed.), *Literature and Religion in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland: Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald. Mediaevalia Groningana* n.s. 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), pp. 1–21.
- Scherb, Victor, *Staging Faith: East Anglian Drama in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Associated University Presses, 2001), pp. 172–90.
- Scherb, Victor, 'Worldly and Sacred Messengers in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*', *English Studies* 73 (1992), pp. 1–9.
- Scoville, Chester N., *Saints and the Audience in Middle English Biblical Drama* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- Sellar, W.Y., 'Motives, Form, Substance, and Sources of the *Georgics*', in *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Virgil*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 174–98.
- Semler, L.E., 'Virtue, Transformation, and Exemplarity in *The Lyfe of Johan Picus*', in A.D. Cousins and Damian Grace (eds), *A Companion to Thomas More* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009), pp. 95–113.
- Seymour, M.C., *John Capgrave*, Authors of the Middle Ages 11 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996).
- Seymour, St. John D., 'The Vision of Adamnán', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 37 (1924–27), pp. 304–12.
- Seymour, St. John D., 'The Bringing Forth of the Soul in Irish Literature', *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1920), pp. 16–20.

- Scott, W.W., 'The Sources', in D.E.R. Watt (gen. ed.), *Scotichronicon by Walter Bower*, 9 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987–1998), Vol. 9, pp. 234–59.
- Sheils, William, 'Polemic as Piety: Thomas Stapleton's *Tres Thomae* and Catholic Controversy in the 1580s', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60.1 (2009), pp. 74–94.
- Shell, Alison, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Sherman, Gail Berkeley, 'Saints, Nuns, and Speech in the *Canterbury Tales*', in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (eds), *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 136–60.
- Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- Simpson, James, *Reform and Cultural Revolution, The Oxford English Literary History*, Vol. 2: 1350–1547 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Sisk, Jennifer, 'Lydgate's Problematic Commission: A Legend of St Edmund for Henry VI', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (2010), pp. 349–75.
- Sisk, Jennifer, 'Religion, Alchemy, and Nostalgic Idealism in Fragment VIII of the *Canterbury Tales*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010), pp. 151–77.
- Smalley, Beryl, 'Ecclesiastical Attitudes to Novelty, c. 1100–c. 1250', reprinted in James Muldoon (ed.), *Travellers, Intellectuals, and the World Beyond Medieval Europe. The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000–1500*, Vol. 10 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 11–29.
- Smalley, Beryl, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960).
- Smith, D. Vance, 'Institutions', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 160–76.
- Smith, Elizabeth Leigh, *Middle English Hagiography and Romance in Fifteenth-Century England: From Competition to Critique* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2002).
- Smith, Michelle A. 'Assessing Gender in the Construction of Scottish Identity, c. 1286–c. 1586' (PhD dissertation, University of Auckland, 2010).
- Somerset, Fiona, '"Hard is with seyntis for to make affray": Lydgate the "Poet-Propagandist" as Hagiographer', in Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 258–78.
- Southern, R.W., *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

- Sponsler, Claire, 'Lydgate and London's Public Culture', in Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (eds), *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 13–33.
- Staley, Lynn, 'Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity', in David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996), pp. 179–259.
- Staley, Lynn, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994).
- Staley, Lynn, 'Chaucer's Tale of the Second Nun and the Strategies of Dissent', *Studies in Philology* 89.3 (1992), pp. 314–33.
- Staley, Lynn, 'The Trope of the Scribe and the Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum* 66.4 (1991), pp. 820–38.
- Stanbury, Sarah, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
- STC: *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland ... 1475–1640*, ed. A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave. 2nd edn, rev. W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976–91).
- Stevenson, Katie, "'Recreations to refresh the spirits of his followers': Walter Bower's Revelations on Cultural Pursuits at James I of Scotland's Court', *Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines* 40 (2007), pp. 9–23.
- Stouck, Mary-Ann, 'Chaucer and Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*', *American Benedictine Review* 33 (1982), pp. 276–91.
- Strohm, Paul, 'Passioun, Lyf, Miracle, Legende: Some Generic Terms in Middle English Hagiographical Narrative', *Chaucer Review* 10 (1975), pp. 62–75, 154–71.
- Sturm-Maddox, Sara, 'Letres escrites i a: The Marvellous Inscribed', in Keith Busby and N.J. Lacy (eds), *Conjunctures: Medieval Studies in Honor of Douglas Kelly* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 515–28.
- Summerson, Henry, 'George (d. c. 303?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com (accessed 17 December 2012).
- Summit, Jennifer, "'Stable in study': Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and Duke Humphrey's Library', in Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (eds), *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 207–31.
- Swanson, R.N., *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215–c. 1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Sweet, W.H.E., 'Lydgate's Retraction and "His Resorte to His Religyoun"', in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (eds), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 343–59.

- Taylor, Charles, *The Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).
- Thompson, Anne B. *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
- Todd, James H., 'Ancient Libraries – Library of the Augustinian Eremites of York', *Notes and Queries* 1 (1849), pp. 83–4.
- Turville-Petre, Thorlac, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Tyerman, Christopher, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
- Voaden, Rosalynn, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 1999).
- Voss, Paul J., 'The Making of a Saint: John Fowler and Sir Thomas More in 1573', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 99.4 (2000), pp. 492–512.
- Wakelin, Daniel, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- Walker, Caroline Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- Walker, Caroline Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).
- Wallace, David, 'Chaucer's Italian Inheritance', in Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 36–57.
- Wallace, David (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Walsham, Alexandra, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', *The Historical Journal* 46.4 (2003), pp. 779–815.
- Watkins, Carl, 'Doctrine, Politics and Purgation: The Vision of Tnúthgal and of Owein at St Patrick's Purgatory', *Journal of Medieval History* 22 (1996), pp. 225–36.
- Watson, Andrew G. (ed.), *Supplement to the Second Edition* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1987).
- Watson, Nicholas, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitution of 1409', *Speculum* 70 (1995), pp. 822–64.
- Watson, Nicholas, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Wenzel, Siegfried, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- Wetherbee, Winthrop, 'Constance and the World in Chaucer and Gower', in R.F. Yeager (ed.), *John Gower: Recent Readings* (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1989), pp. 65–93.

- White, Paul Whitfield, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage and Playing in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- White, Paul Whitfield, 'Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* and Jean Calvin', *Notes and Queries* 28 (1981), pp. 508–12.
- Wickham, Glynn, 'The Staging of Saint Plays in England', in Sandro Sticca (ed.), *The Medieval Drama* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), pp. 99–119.
- Williams, Ifor, 'Dwy Gân o Lyfr Coch Talgarth', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 2 (1923–25), pp. 118–30.
- Williams, Ifor, 'Dafydd ap Gwilym a'r glêr', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1913–14), pp. 83–204.
- Williams, J.E. 'Caerwyn, "Pethau nas cyhoeddwyd": 7. Ymryson ac Ymddiddan y Corff a'r Enaid', *National Library of Wales Journal* 4 (1946), pp. 184–8.
- Wilson, Alan J., *St Margaret, Queen of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1993).
- Wimsatt, K.W. and Monroe Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).
- Windeatt, B.A., 'Julian of Norwich and Her Audience', *Review of English Studies* 28.109 (1977), pp. 1–17.
- Winstead, Karen A., *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
- Winstead, Karen A., 'Saintly Exemplarity', in: Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 335–51.
- Winstead, Karen A., *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- Winstead, Karen A., 'Capgrave's Saint Katherine and the Perils of Gynecocracy', *Viator* 25 (1994), pp. 361–76.
- Winstead, Karen A., 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Alban: Martyrdom and Prudent Pollicie', *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994), pp. 221–41.
- Winstead, Karen A., 'Piety, Politics, and Social Commitment in Capgrave's *Life of St Katherine*', *Mediaevalia et Humanistica* 17 (1991), pp. 59–80.
- Wolpers, Theodor, *Die englische Heiligenlegende des Mittelalters: Eine Formgeschichte des Legendenerzählens von der spätantiken lateinischen Tradition bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, *Anglia* 10 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1964).
- Woodcock, Matthew, 'Crossovers and Afterlife', in Sarah Salih (ed.), *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 141–56.
- Wooden, Warren W., 'Structural Patterning in William Roper's *Life of More*', *Moreana* 64 (1980), pp. 100–6.

- Wooding, Jonathan (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000).
- Woolf, Rosemary, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).
- Woolfson, Jonathan (ed.), *Reassessing Tudor Humanism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- Wright, Charles D., *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- Wright, Robert E., 'The "Boke Performyd": Affective Technique and Reader Response in the *Showings* of Julian of Norwich', *Christianity and Literature* 36.4 (1987), pp. 13–32.
- Zeeman, Nicolette, 'Imaginative Theory', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 222–40.

Index

Note: Literary works can be found under authors' names if known. Individual saints are listed under 'saints'. The letter 'n.' after a page reference indicates the number of a note on that page.

- Abbotsford House MS 229, 231
Ackroyd, Peter 75
Ælfric 49–52, 118
 Life of Edmund 49–50
affective piety 80–6, 88–9
Alexander III 25–7
Alexander, Dominic 20
Andrew of Wyntoun 32–4
Anselm of Bec 82
Arundel MS 228, 242n.1
Athanasius 118
Atheling, Edgar 19
Atheling, Edward 19
Attridge, Derek 4–5, 13–14
Austin Friars 143–5
authority 7, 9, 12, 26, 60, 66, 70, 75, 155, 202n.2, 238–9
 and authorship 85–6, 90, 160, 164, 212–13, 215
 literary 117–21, 125–7, 183–6, 237
 religious 43, 47, 52, 80, 89

Badir, Patricia 199, 201
Baker, Denise 88
Bartlett, Robert 23
Baswell, Christopher 144
Battle of Largs 25, 28–33
Battle of Maldon, The 49
Battle of Roslin 32
Bede
 Ecclesiastical History 60, 67–8, 77n.16, 78n.18, 144n.29

Bennett, Andrew 4, 10
Bernard of Clairvaux 82
Bernau, Anke 50
Boccaccio, Giovanni 61, 130n.1
Body and Soul, debate between
 'Dadl y Corff a'r Enaid' 99–100
 'Ymddiddan' 101–2, 104–6
 'Ymryson' 101, 113n.22
Bokenham, Osbern 172
 Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins 14, 228–31, 242
Book of Leinster 103
Bower, Richard 202
Bower, Walter 11, 19, 23–34, 235–6, 239

Caesarius of Heisterbach 61
calendar, the 228–31
Calvin, John 201
Canmore, Malcolm 19
Cannon, Christopher 163, 165, 173, 241, 244n.10
canonisation 18, 20, 23–6
Capgrave, John 6, 15n.16, 134–5, 172, 209, 221n.7, 239
 classical sources 136–50
Carley, James 143–5
Cato (M. Porcius) 185, 214–15
Caxton, William 186
Cent, Siôn 106–7
chanson de geste 43, 49, 238
Charlewood, John 192

- Chaucer, Geoffrey 80, 135–7, 146,
164, 237, 241
Canterbury Tales 61, 119–21,
125–8
Clerk's Tale 117, 120–3, 126–7
House of Fame 121
Legend of Good Women 116,
119–20, 124, 130n.15, 202
Man of Law's Tale 117, 120–1,
123–7, 132n.32, 186
Parliament of Fowls 142,
148n.24
Physician's Tale 117, 120–3,
125–7, 186
Prioress's Tale 127
Second Nun's Tale 119, 125, 127,
172, 185–6, 243n.6
Squire's Tale 168n.22
Tale of Melibee 118, 130n.11
Tale of Sir Thopas 118, 130n.11
Troilus and Criseyde 117, 134
Wife of Bath's Tale 125–6,
132n.34, 136–7, 146
- chivalry 44, 47, 49–51
see also soldier-saints
- Chrétien de Troyes 45–7
- Cicero (M. Tullius) 155, 168n.21,
213–14, 225n.31, 237, 244n.19
- classical literature
as models 6–8, 119–20, 134–50,
161–2, 174, 176, 213–18,
221n.7
- Clopper, Lawrence 200, 207n.49
- Coletti, Theresa 193–5, 198,
204n.15
- colours 152–60, 169n.28, 170n.32,
186, 219, 237
- conversion 44, 48, 53, 153, 156,
158, 161–2, 191, 193–201,
205n.27, 237, 240
- corporeality 194, 197
- Coupar Angus MS 31, 36
- Cowen, Janet M. 124, 129n.4,
131n.27, 132n.30
- Cranmer, Thomas 201, 207n.52
- Crucifixion 40, 44–5, 82–4
- Cursor Mundi* 62
- Dafydd ap Gwilym 107–8
- Davenport, Tony 65, 77n.11
- debate poetry see Body and Soul,
debate between
- Dekker, Thomas 202
- devotional literature 23, 80–95,
236
- didacticism 55, 60–3, 75, 81, 87,
97, 102, 109, 114n.29, 184–6,
200–2
- Digby MS see *Mary Magdalen*
(Digby MS)
- discourse 66, 89, 178–9, 186
direct 182–4
of laureation 152–4, 175
negotiation of discourses
116–18, 126–7
- Ditchburn, David 33
- Dives and Pauper* 197–8
- Dream of the Rood, The* 50
- dream vision 14, 24–5, 27–34,
52–3, 98, 119, 142, 234–6
- Ellis, John M. 4
- Englishness 62–70, 74–6, 237
- Erasmus, Desiderius 212–13
- exempla 12, 19, 60–6, 65–73,
145
- exemplarity 6, 10, 19, 21, 34, 38,
84, 142, 152, 160, 172–3, 184,
209–16, 236
- experience 61, 64–5, 75–6, 80–92,
94n.32, 141, 146, 185, 230–1,
233–6
- fabliaux 12, 62–3, 104
- Findon, Joanne 192
- form 173, 211, 220, 229, 231,
236
- formalism 3–4, 173
- frame narrative 61–2, 66–7, 71,
95n.41, 185, 234
- Fredeman, Jane 134–5
- Furnivall, Frederick 134
- Galloway, Andrew 2–3
- gender 14, 26, 44–7, 70, 86–7,
95n.40, 121–2, 165, 179–82,
193–5, 190n.30, 199
- genre 5–8, 10–12, 38–43, 54, 63–5,
76, 97–8, 109, 118–20, 134–5,
147n.3, 151–2, 163, 172–3,

- 185–6, 200, 211–12, 204n.14,
220, 226n.55, 242
- Gibson, Gail McMurray 192, 194
- Gillespie, Alexandra 161–2
- Gillespie, Vincent 195
- Goch, Iolo 104, 109, 113n.22
- Gower, John 3
- Grady, Frank 3
- Grantley, Daryll 196–7
- Gregory of Tours 118
- Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory
I) 73, 60, 193, 197–8
- Grosseteste, Robert 98
- Guido delle Colonne 152
- Guillaume de Deguileville 96,
160
- hagio-biography 211, 213, 215–16,
220, 236
- hagiography *see* saints' legends
- Hahn, Cynthia 118
- Harpsfield, Nicholas 207n.52,
209–21
- Havelok the Dane* 134
- Henry of Lancaster 35
- Henryson, Robert 30
- Herod 41, 43, 55
- heroism 44, 46, 49–53, 63–6, 76,
154, 238
- Hoccleve, Thomas 241
- Homer 141, 155, 157, 159
- Horstmann, Carl 134
- humanism 146, 150n.40, 209–11,
214–17, 222n.11, 236–7,
239–40
- vernacular 6–7, 16n.22
- imitatio Christi* 47, 49, 82, 118
- Ipomedon* 49
- James, Sarah 221n.7
- Jocelin of Furness 22–3
- John of Fordun 24
Chronicle 24–6
- Julian of Norwich 13, 91–2, 236
Showings 81, 85–90
- Karnes, Michelle 85, 93n.20
- Kempe, Margery 10, 13, 26,
94n.40, 236
- The Book of Margery Kempe* 26,
81, 89, 95n.41
- Kieckhefer, Richard 82
- Kingis Quair, The* 28
- Knight, Rhonda 64
- knighthood 38–55, 152, 156,
170n.37, 171n.42, 238
- Langland, William 3, 80
- Lateran Council, Fourth 61
- Leabhar Breac* 98, 103
- Lebor na hUidre* ('Book of the Dun
Cow') 103
- Legenda Aurea* *see* saints' legends
- Liber Pluscardensis* 23
- Life of St Katherine* *see* Capgrave,
John
- literariness 20, 33–4, 81–4, 116–22,
134–7, 145–7, 229–30, 235–6
and authorisation 9–10
concept 1–3
elements of 4–6, 8, 10, 141–3,
169n.29
emergence of 6–7, 127–8, 164–5,
172, 185
as institution 9
- literary, the *see* literariness
- liturgy 193, 232–4
- Livy (T. Livius) 120
- Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* ('Black Book
of Carmarthen') 99
- Longinus 53
- Lucan (M. Annaeus Lucanus)
130n.8, 155
- Lucifer 74
- Lupton, Julia Reinhard 8, 17n.23,
119, 130n.16, 152, 209, 218,
221n.3
- Luther, Martin 216–17
- Lydgate, John 6–7, 96, 133n.42,
133n.44, 151–71, 172, 186,
229, 237, 241
and conceptualisation of past
163–5
- Fall of Princes* 151, 153–4, 156,
169n.31
- Life of Our Lady* 151, 163–4,
169n.29
- Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*
96, 103

- Lydgate, John (*cont.*)
 (saintly) poetics 155–60, 173–8,
 182–4
 Saint Albion and Saint
 Amphibalus 151, 168n.15,
 169n.24, 174
 St Edmund and St Fremund 151,
 168n.15, 169n.24, 174
 St George 173, 175, 178, 183–4,
 188n.15
 St Gyles 173, 177
 St Margaret 170n.32, 173–6,
 178–80, 182
 Troy Book 151–4, 164
 lyric 231, 233
- MacCulloch, Diarmaid 38
 McIlroy, Claire 84
 McRoberts, David 33
 McRoberts thesis 32
 Malory, Thomas 45, 47–8
 Mannyng, Robert 60–79
 The Chronicle of England 64,
 78n.17
 Handlyng Synne 60–79
 Manuel des Pechiez 60, 62, 64, 69,
 72, 74–5
 Margaret of Navarre 61
 martyrdom 26, 38, 41–4, 47–51,
 54–5, 98, 104, 120, 122–5,
 152, 155, 162, 165–6, 169n.31,
 183, 186, 202, 209, 211–15,
 231
 Mary (Blessed Virgin) 13, 66,
 131n.19, 154, 163
Mary Magdalen (Digby MS)
 191–206, 240
 Mary Magdalene 13, 191–5,
 197–202, 240
 three Marys 192–3
 meditation 81–2, 85–6, 88–9,
 93n.18, 94n.32, 235
 Meyer-Lee, Robert J. 151, 164–5,
 168n.19, 168n.21, 169n.29,
 241
 Middleton, Anne 128
 Middleton, Thomas 202
 Miller, Jacqueline T. 121, 124
 Minnis, Alastair 117, 130n.14
 miracles 1, 11, 18–25, 27–8,
 30–4, 42, 48, 68, 78n.25, 123,
 131n.19, 196–7, 200, 210, 220,
 240
 Mirk, John 52, 76
 More, Cresacre 210–12, 220–3, 240
 More, Thomas 209–20, 236–7
 and classical allusions 212–16
 De Tristitia Christi 217
 Dialogue of Comfort against
 Tribulation 217
 as humanist saint 210–11
 Lyfe of Johan Picus 209
 Treatise to Receive the Blessed
 Body of our Lord, A 217
 Treatise upon the Passion, A 217
 Utopia 216
 Morris, Colin 82
 Morton, John, Cardinal 213
 Murray, Kylie 28
 Muses, the 154, 174, 183
 mystery plays 40, 41–6, 54–7
 Chester 40–1
 N-Town 40–1
 Towneley 40–1
 York 40
 mystics *see* Julian of Norwich;
 Kempe, Margery; Rolle,
 Richard
 mythology 24, 37n.52, 138, 161–2,
 167n.6
- narrator 61–2, 85–6, 89, 91, 116,
 118–20, 123, 126–7, 131n.20,
 176, 179, 183–4, 237
 nationhood 24, 27, 30–4, 60–6, 69,
 75–6, 158–9, 223n.19, 235–6,
 237
 new criticism 2–4
 new formalism 3
 Nider, Johannes 61–2
 Nisse, Ruth 165–6
- O'Connell, Michael 197
 Ó Dálaigh, Donnchadh Mór 103
 Odo of Cheriton 72
 Offa 158–9
 Orpheus 161
 Ovid (P. Naso) 130n.8, 136–8, 141,
 144
 Metamorphoses 137–8, 143–4

- Remedia Amoris* 137, 143–4, 146
- Owl and the Nightingale, The* 97
- Passion, the 41, 55, 80, 82–6, 152, 157, 161, 167n.12
- Pearl* 14, 234–5
- Pearsall, Derek 64, 134, 151, 173
- performance 89, 118, 120, 125–7, 130n.11, 191–202
- and sanctity 4–5, 13–14, 21, 23, 173
- persona (narrative) 13, 62, 80–1, 83–92, 119, 127, 130n.11, 210, 229, 236
- Petrarch, Francesco 123, 126, 153, 155
- Phelpstead, Carl 50
- Phillip, John 202
- piety 11, 21–2, 45, 49, 78n.25, 98, 108, 131n.27, 134, 147n.3, 191, 193, 195, 201, 213, 217
- Pilate (Pontius) 40–1, 53
- Play of the Sacrament* (Croxtton) 196
- poetics, saintly *see* Lydgate, John
- politics 18–19, 25, 28, 32–4, 52, 65, 160, 210, 213–14, 222n.11, 235–6, 238–9, 243n.8
- prayer 32, 42, 66–7, 69, 74, 82, 97, 103, 155–6, 159, 164, 177, 183–4, 230–1
- preaching 32, 60–3, 87, 182, 189, 221n.7
- prologues 20, 76n.1, 103, 119, 125–6, 136, 138, 156, 169n.31, 173, 178, 185, 189–9, 201
- Protestantism 198–200, 225n.32
- pseudo-hagiography 117, 119–21, 124–7, 131n.19
- Queste del Saint Graal* 47
- Reinecke, George F. 151, 169n.27
- relics 8, 26–7, 76, 109, 163, 210, 218–20
- Resurrection, the 39–40, 42, 193, 200
- rhetoric 81, 84–5, 107, 110n.5, 134, 143, 156–7, 161, 165, 168n.21, 169n.28, 173–4, 186, 208n.55, 216–17, 222n.11, 241
- rhyme 62, 136, 178, 228–31, 242, 243n.6
- Rolle, Richard 13, 80–5, 90–2, 236
- Meditations on the Passion* 80–5, 87, 89–93
- Roman de la Rose* 170n.34, 185
- romance 11–12, 38–9, 41–52, 54–5, 62–3, 119–20, 134–5, 234–5, 238–40
- Grail romances *see* Chrétien de Troyes
- Roper, William 209–14
- Royle, Nicholas 4, 10
- Russian formalism 4
- sacraments 77n.13, 82, 240
- saints
- as national figure 27, 30–4, 159
- Adamnán 103
- Alban/Albon 151–3, 155–63, 165, 169n.13, 171n.42, 173–4, 176
- Amphibalus 151–6, 161–3, 170n.37, 171n.42, 187
- Andrew 32
- Thomas Becket 44, 54, 211
- Cecilia 116, 119, 124–5, 185–6
- Christopher 47–9
- Cuthbert 20, 22
- Edith of Wilton 70
- Edmund 38, 49–50, 54, 174–6
- Edward the Confessor 19, 69
- Eustace 44, 55
- Eutychius 67, 73
- Florentius 67, 73–4
- Francis 52–3
- Fursey 67–70, 77n.16
- George 38, 42, 50–2, 55, 175–6, 178, 183–4, 186, 188n.11
- Katherine 134–46, 148n.23, 209, 239
- Magnus 69–71
- Margaret of Antiochia 168n.15, 170n.32, 174–6, 178–84, 188n.11

saints (*cont.*)

- Margaret of Scotland 18–34, 235–6, 239
- Mary Magdalene 191–202
- Maurice 38, 42–3, 50, 55
- Sebastian 38, 42, 44, 50, 55
- Sulpicius 42–3
- Theodore 42
- Thomas of Dover 213
- Ursula 228, 231, 242
- saints' legends 6–7, 47–9, 74–6, 116, 151, 167n.6, 172–9, 184–6, 229, 237, 241
 - and biography 21, 209, 211–22, 220, 223n.22
 - Festial* see Mirk, John
 - Gilte Legende* 51, 53, 131n.20, 178, 189n.16, 193
 - Golden Legend* see Caxton, William
 - Legenda Aurea* 43, 51, 129
 - Life of Our Lady* see Lydgate, John
 - Life of St Katherine* see Capgrave, John
 - Northern Homily Cycle* 62, 76n.1
 - Saint Albion and Saint Amphibalus* see Lydgate, John
 - St Edmund and St Fremund* see Lydgate, John
 - St George* see Lydgate, John
 - St Gyles* see Lydgate, John
 - St Margaret* see Lydgate, John
 - Scottish Legendary* 172, 177–86, 188n.14
 - Second Nun's Tale* see Chaucer, Geoffrey
 - South English Legendary* 11, 42, 50–2, 54
 - Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins* see Bokenham, Osbern
- Sanok, Catherine 94n.40, 119, 122, 128, 130n.15
- Scanlon, Larry 160
- Scota 24, 27, 32, 37n.52
- Scotichronicon* see Bower, Walter
- Scott, W.W. 24
- Scottish Legendary* see saints' legends
- Scripture 13, 87, 140, 191
- secularisation 8, 14, 17, 208, 230, 238–9, 240–1
- self-fashioning 80–92
- sermons 61, 63, 76n.1, 200
- Seven Deadly Sins 71–2, 178
- Seymour, M.C. 134, 146
- singularity, of literature 4
- Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* 14, 234–5
- Sisk, Jennifer L. 151, 155, 185, 237
- Skelton, John 241
- Smalley, Beryl 144
- Smith, D. Vance 9
- Smith, Michelle 32
- soldier-saints 32–55
- Somerset, Fiona 151
- South English Legendary* see saints' legends
- Southern, R.W. 82
- spectacle 191–8, 202, 240
- Staley, Lynn 90–1
- Stapleton, Thomas 210–11, 213–17, 219–20
- structuralism 3
- subjectivity 86, 90, 117, 125, 127
- temporality 14, 158–2, 165, 173, 209, 231–7, 242
- Thomas of Cantimpré 72
- time 41, 65, 69, 97–8, 159–64, 214, 217, 228–42
 - narrative time 138, 154
- Turgot, Bishop 19–22, 26, 33, 35n.4
- Tyndale, William 216
- Vercelli Book* 97
- Virgil (P. Maro) 130n.8, 135, 138–40, 143–5, 153, 155
- Aeneid* 138, 143–4
- Eclogues* 144
- Georgics* 6, 138, 140, 143–5, 150n.40
- virtue 21, 45, 49–50, 55, 63, 87, 121–5, 140, 157–8, 160–1
- Vision of Adamnán* 103
- Voaden, Rosalynn 89

- Wager, Lewis 13, 191–3,
198–202
- Wakelin, Daniel 137, 145–6,
222n.11
- Walker, Caroline Bynum 194
- Wars of Independence (Scottish)
25, 27
- Watson, Nicholas 84
- Watt, D.E.R. 24, 36n.31
- Wemyss, John 28–30
- Whethamstede, John 151,
153
- Windeatt, Barry 88, 94n.32
- Winstead, Karen 19, 143
- women, representation of *see*
gender
- Woolf, Rosemary 97
- Wright, Robert 88
- Zeeman, Nicolette 10